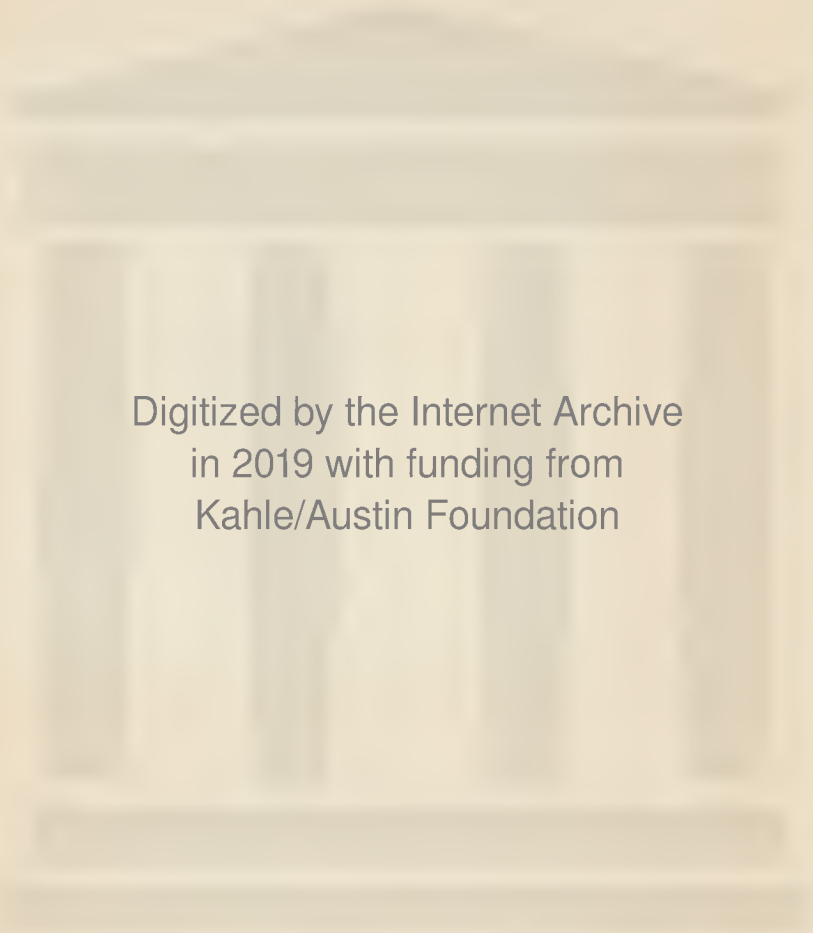


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HARVARD HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS

XXXVIII

Published under the direction of the Department of History
from the income of the Robert Louis Stroock Fund



Paris Rosach, édit. Quai Voltaire 24

A. Saxe

Paris Auguste Hey 162 r. du Bac

Buenavente

1870. 17. 1

Buenavente

The Farcy Lithograph
(Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

*The First Professional
Revolutionist:
Filippo Michele Buonarroti
(1761–1837)*

A Biographical Essay
by
ELIZABETH L. EISENSTEIN

And make it his mature ambition
To think no thought but ours,
To hunger, work illegally
And be anonymous.

W. H. AUDEN

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

1959

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Distributed in Great Britain by
Oxford University Press, London

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Made and printed in Great Britain by William Clowes and Sons Ltd,
London and Beccles

ONULP

To

Violet Barbour, Mildred Campbell, and Evalyn Clark

Preface

Every biographer has a vested interest in the figure he portrays. The more obscure the subject, the more the biographer tends to exaggerate its true proportions in order to justify not only his own considerable expenditure of time and effort, but also the similar investment indirectly demanded of the prospective reader. The following pages have been written in the belief that Buonarroti deserves more consideration from historians than he has hitherto received. They have also been written in the belief that his dimensions as an historical subject lend themselves to a relatively brief suggestive essay, which utilizes only published sources and secondary studies.

To produce a full-scale work on Buonarroti's life and times would require several volumes as well as intensive research in various European archives. In laying the foundations for this task, a group of Italian scholars have begun to explore various facets of the subject. Several substantial works of scholarship, based on their detailed investigations, have already appeared. One of the purposes of this essay is to call attention to this new work and to introduce some of it to those who are unlikely, because of the language barrier, to become familiar with it in the near future. However, this is a secondary purpose only. I hope this study will serve as something more than an interim report on work in progress abroad. It was conceived before word from Italy had reached these shores, in the belief that the historical significance of Buonarroti's career had been overlooked. Although I have attempted to take into account the continuously increasing mass of detailed biographical information that has appeared since the inception of this study, I still regard its primary function as an interpretative one. Only a small portion of the recent work, therefore, has been selected and used for the purpose

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of portraying Buonarroti in the role suggested by the title of this essay.

Throughout the following study, Buonarroti has been viewed not only as a little known historic figure, whose life spanned a long and turbulent era, intersecting with many important figures and epoch-making events, but more particularly, as a pioneer in a new profession which has been overlooked by many historians and consequently remains largely undefined. It is primarily because I believe that his career helps to explain the origins of this new profession that I have attempted to follow its course.

In the pursuit of Buonarroti's career, however, one must traverse an uneven historical terrain. The course of his life covers some areas which have been deeply ploughed and others which have been almost entirely uncultivated. Although many of these former areas have been deliberately bypassed, a few excursions into historiography seemed indispensable. They have been deliberately curtailed, however, in order to preserve some proportion and unity in the treatment of the subject as a whole. With respect to the latter areas, the direction chosen for exploration must be partially dictated by one's own interests. A large portion of the recent Italian work is accordingly devoted to an analysis of the internal development of the *Risorgimento*; my own concern with the nineteenth-century French scene has led to a shift in emphasis and to occasional digressions, despite an attempt to stick closely to the main theme and to avoid becoming entangled in side issues.

It is evident from these various detours and digressions that my interpretation diverges rather markedly from that of most of the authorities responsible for the recent work on Buonarroti. It seems both ungracious and ungrateful, however, to take issue with those who have painstakingly collected much of the material used in this study, without indicating somewhere the extent to which the narrative itself depends upon their efforts. Here, perhaps, is the logical place to pay tribute to the remarkable erudition and command of detailed information, based on intensive archival research, exhibited by Armando Saitta, Pia Rosa Onnis, Alessandro Galante Garrone, Arthur Müller Lehning and all those other authorities whose re-

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peated appearance on the footnotes of the following pages testifies to the extent of my indebtedness. Furthermore several authors, namely Pia Onnis, Emilia Morelli, Charles F. Delzell, Samuel Bernstein should also be thanked for responding most courteously and promptly (and in the case of Alessandro Galante Garrone, who sent me his books as well as reprints, most generously) to requests for reprints and information from an unknown correspondent.

With respect to the more customary acknowledgements of scholarly help, I am particularly indebted to Professor Crane Brinton of Harvard University, who not only read my first draft and urged me to revise it for the *Harvard Historical Monographs* series, but who also provided a great many detailed criticisms which were so helpful that I have attempted to incorporate most of them in my final version. Although his encouragement made possible the completion of this study, Professor Brinton is, of course, in no way responsible for its shortcomings. Thanks are also due to Professor Donald C. McKay of Amherst College and Professor Hans Kohn of the City College of New York for having read my first draft and for their suggestions concerning its bibliography and its publication.

M. Edmund Pognon, curator of the Cabinet des Estampes at the Bibliothèque Nationale, and M. René Hilsum, of the Editions Sociales, helped to locate the portraits which illustrate this book. I am particularly grateful to Professor Leon Roudiez of Pennsylvania State University who sacrificed part of his summer vacation in order to get prints of these portraits sent to me in time to meet the publication deadline.

One more acknowledgement is in order. Observant readers may have already come across the citation on the title page, taken from Auden's poem, "In Father's Footsteps," in a similar context.¹ Along with the citations at the beginning of Chapters 3 and 5 it was borrowed from Bertram D. Wolfe's *Three Who Made a Revolution*:

¹ These four lines were taken (out of context) from W. H. Auden's poem "In Father's Footsteps," *The Collected Poems of W. H. Auden* (New York, 1945), p. 95. They have been reproduced by kind permission of Random House, Inc., New York and Faber and Faber, Ltd., London.

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A Biographical History, New York, 1948. These citations seemed too apropos to be resisted. And of course I hoped to point up the fact that, without in any way straining their meaning, certain phrases most appropriately used in a book devoted to Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin could also be appropriately used in a book devoted to Buonarroti.

E.L.E.

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*The First Professional
Revolutionist:
Filippo Michele Buonarroti
(1761—1837)*

Introduction

After Bakunin had died, the Swiss police "enquired of Alfred Vogt what had been the deceased's occupation or means of livelihood. It was a puzzling question."

E. H. Carr, *Bakunin*, p. 488

"In Tuscany, one Filippo Buonarroti attempted to foment a rising; he was arrested and expelled and continued his revolutionary activities in France."¹ This was the political debut of the man whom Bakunin was to call "the greatest conspirator of the century";² but since his name does not appear anywhere else in *A Concise History of Italy*, the reader could scarcely be expected to realize the significance of this episode. It is clear from the English translation of Bakunin's remark that the supreme accolade, accorded by a professional judging the work of a fellow professional, had failed to win for Buonarroti even the minor distinction of a correctly spelled name. In the light of the verdict of posterity, Bakunin's high estimate may be subject to question. It undoubtedly rested on the fact that his "greatest conspirator" of the nineteenth century was also the first to make a profession out of his unusual occupation. Even in his unassailable position as a pioneer, however, Buonarroti has not yet received adequate recognition.

¹ L. Salvatorelli, *A Concise History of Italy*, tr. B. Miall (New York, 1940), p. 489.

² M. Bakunin, "Federalism, Socialism, and Anti-Theologism," *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, ed. G. P. Maximoff (Glencoe, 1953), p. 277. The name is, as usual, misspelled "Buonarotti."

"There was no such thing as a professional revolutionist before the nineteenth century—before the French Revolution set the example."³ One may agree with the first part of this declaration while finding the second part perplexing. It was not that complex historical abstraction "the French Revolution" but a flesh and blood revolutionist—a man of '93 who survived—who "set the example." The emergence of the professional revolutionist has been too infrequently explored by historians, who are naturally drawn to subjects where access to information is comparatively easy and consequently tend to neglect the secret, conspiratorial world—peopled by former *Illuminés* and future anarchists—to which the professional revolutionist belonged. The field, as a result, has been left open for frightened polemicists and political demagogues to occupy. The best work has been done by perceptive novelists, such as Conrad and Dostoevsky, and by literary journalists, such as Edmund Wilson and Rebecca West.⁴

Although few historians, then, have noted it, the emergence of the professional revolutionist was one of the most important innovations of the nineteenth century. The "amateur"—the doctor, lawyer, or merchant—who temporarily assumed the role during a particular revolution and usually abandoned it only when he could become an administrator in the new regime, had long been a familiar figure on the political scene; but the frequently unemployed professional—the man who attempted to create a situation that would make possible the practice of his craft, who had a vested interest in "revolution" in general—was a new phenomenon. It was symptomatic of the status attained by the new vocation at the century's end that Kropotkin, like any respectable professional man, could have his "Autobiography of a Revolutionist" published as a serial in the *Atlantic Monthly*. The title was accurate enough, although relevant to no revolution in particular.

³ R. R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled* (Princeton, 1941), p. 20.

⁴ Max Nomad's *Apostles of Revolution* (Boston, 1939), and E. H. Carr's *The Romantic Exiles* (London, 1933) are, despite considerable scholarly research, also "popular" works in the Wilson-West journalistic tradition.

This separation of the person of the revolutionist from the particular revolutionary event inaugurated a new political era. The origins of this separation may be found in the refusal of certain ardent believers in the Republic of Virtue to accept the verdict of Thermidor as a final one. These men regarded the fall of Robespierre, the death of Babeuf, and the triumph of the counter-revolution as temporary setbacks in a continuing struggle to achieve a perfect society—as battles lost in a war that could still be won. For them, the Revolution persisted long after the particular era which most historians would classify as revolutionary had come to an end.⁵ As the decades passed, the idea of this continuing Revolution became increasingly detached from any specific revolutionary event. The war had, in fact, been lost; but defeat was never conceded. Instead the *révolution en permanence* was declared.⁶ Buonarroti was, perhaps, the first man to shape his life in accordance with the requirements of this “permanent revolution.” The atypical aspect of his long and remarkably consistent career is indicated by the paradoxical fact that his existence as an exile from his native land because of his espousal of the French Revolution began when he was still in his twenties; his most important achievements as a Parisian Jacobin were made when he was over seventy. It was only in his later years, indeed, that he came into his own for he followed what was to become a typical pattern, from youthful disciple to conspiratorial expert to venerated patriarch. Yet if American students of European history recognize his name at all, it is only in connection with one of the last episodes of the eighteenth-century Revolution.

The figure of Philippe Buonarroti has long been familiar to students of “the Babeuf plot.” His role as a leader, alongside

⁵ Although Godfrey Elton, *The Revolutionary Idea in France (1789–1871)* (London, 1923), actually tried to reshape the conventional periodization of French history—in accordance with the belief that “the Revolution is continuous. Nothing came to an end in 1799” (p. 87)—few historians have followed suit.

⁶ For discussion of this phrase (immortalized by Marx in 1850) see A. B. Spitzer, *The Revolutionary Ideas of August Blanqui*, Columbia Studies in the Social Sciences # 594 (New York, 1957), pp. 168n., 171n.

Babeuf and Darthé, and especially his subsequent role as historian of the affair must bring him to the attention of any scholar concerned with this event. To know Buonarroti only because of his collaboration with Babeuf is to miss the significance of one of the most important careers in the nineteenth century. Yet until the last two decades, the relatively slim bibliography on Buonarroti was, with the sole exception of his admission to the well-populated "Pantheon of Martyrs to Italian Liberty," associated almost entirely with Babouvism or with its corollary—the origins of French socialism.⁷ Outside Italy this situation still persists and even the recently revised *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française* (1955) devotes a relatively insignificant amount of space to an inadequate account of Buonarroti's career after 1815.⁸ Still French scholars like Georges Lefebvre and Jacques Godechot have revealed a solid acquaintance with Buonarroti's career and Samuel Bernstein's recent biography has been translated into French as well as Italian, even though it is unavailable in an English version.⁹ It is among English-speaking historians that the neglect of Buonarroti has attained major proportions. An Oxford don writing recently on *The Revolutionary Movement in France 1815–1871* manages to mention and misspell Buonarroti's name twice—once as a Babouvist survivor who influenced Blanqui and once as the Babouvist lieutenant who wrote the "Bible of the Revolutionaries" which he misdates.¹⁰ In 1952, a review in *The American Historical Review* managed to squeeze a truly remarkable amount of misinformation into a brief space.¹¹ Even though the appearance of Arthur Lehning's valuable article—written in English and published in a polylingual international journal under Dutch auspices—suggests that this situation is being remedied,

⁷ For further details, see Survey of Bibliography.

⁸ A. Martin, "Buonarroti," *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française*—Brun—Cabre (Paris, 1955), pp. 673–674.

⁹ See Bibliographical Essay, p. 167, n. 4, *infra*.

¹⁰ John Plamenatz, *The Revolutionary Movement in France 1815–1871* (London, 1952), pp. 27, 45.

¹¹ B. Hyslop and R. Clough, review article, *The American Historical Review* (1952) LVII, 744–745.

careful readers of *The Times Literary Supplement* learned of this work from a notice which misspelled Buonarroti's name.¹²

A variety of factors account for this failure to recognize Buonarroti as one of the "makers of modern Europe." The obscurity which his chosen profession dictated and which involved the use of aliases and tactics of secret infiltration made it unlikely that his name would evoke a "shock of recognition" after his death in 1837.¹³ The cosmopolitan character of his activities and the long time span they covered, worked against his winning acclaim during a century when historiography was fragmented in terms of nationalist sentiment and scientific specialization; the outlines of his figure were only dimly perceived from time to time and from place to place by scholars who spoke different languages and whose special fields (like Babouvism and the Risorgimento for example) rarely radiated into one another. Indeed the formidable language barrier (as well as different national viewpoints) still operate to prevent a full recognition by Anglo-American scholars of the results of a new flowering of Italian research.

For in the last decade, there has arisen in Italian academic circles a veritable industry based on Buonarrotian research.¹⁴ Two books by Alessandro Galante Garrone, two volumes by Armando Saitta, two chapters by Delio Cantimori, a spate of periodical articles by these and other authorities—the most noted of whom, Pia Onnis, plans to produce a full-scale biography—all testify to a remarkable revival of interest. According to Signora Onnis, this revival stems from a post Mussolini reaction to the Fascist line (which tried to muffle the impact of the French Revolution on the Italian national awakening) leading to a new emphasis on the role of the Italian "jacobins" in the Risorgimento.¹⁵ That there is as well as this

¹² See notice on Arthur Lehning, "Buonarroti and his International Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History* (1956), I, 112-140, in *The Times Literary Supplement*, Sept. 7, 1956, p. 530.

¹³ Max Nomad, for example, classes him as a "dreamer" and "not a man of action." *Apostles of Revolution*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁴ For a detailed account of its output, see Survey of Bibliography, pp. 170-188, *infra*.

¹⁵ P. Onnis, "Les Etudes Italiennes sur l'Histoire de la Révolution Française de 1940 à 1949," *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (1950) XXII, 360.

negative factor, the positive one of the Communist allegiance of many Italian intellectuals and that the figure of Buonarroti may be exploited in the attempt to Italianize the party line—to give it historical and national roots—also seems evident.¹⁶ Finally those Catholic intellectuals who regard Communist totalitarianism as simply one end product of the optimistic, secular fallacies generated by the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, have discovered in Buonarroti's career new evidence to support their thesis.¹⁷

Whatever the motivation for this new research, it rapidly acquired a scholarly momentum of its own that has carried it on to respectable academic grounds. Already almost every phase of Buonarroti's long career requires a separate historiographical analysis. But while the arguments will go on for many years, along with the uncovering of new evidence, it is now at least clear that all previous biographical references are outdated. Because Buonarroti's name appears infrequently on the pages of most history books and since he did, in fact, play a marginal role in the "epoch-making" events of his day, this current revision of his biography may appear to be a narrow pedantic exercise. Some of the recent research does have this appearance. At more than one point, what Mr. Trevor-Roper calls "the principle of unequal scholarship" seems to be at work. Broader issues have not received the same scrupulous attention devoted to minor biographical details. Even as clouds of dust are being raised off old documents, the object of this flurry of historical activity tends to be obscured.

Yet much of the recent Buonarrotian research has a direct bearing on a wide variety of scholarly work, treating diverse aspects of modern European history. Some of these wider pedantic implications will be suggested in the course of this essay—in the hope that further study will be stimulated and that the relationship between Buonarroti's career and several important nineteenth-century developments will become clearer. The main purpose of this essay, however, is to

¹⁶ This is discussed in Part I of the bibliographical essay. See pp. 163–164, *infra*.

¹⁷ This seems to be the viewpoint of the journal which published Arsenio Frugoni, "La Formazione dell'egualitario Filippo Buonarroti," *Humanitas* (May 1948), 470–482.

offer a preliminary investigation into the origins of a new vocation by exploring the development of Buonarroti's career itself. From the vantage point of the middle decades of the twentieth century, it seems likely that others share, with the author, a certain curiosity about the emergence of the professional revolutionist upon the stage of history. In presenting the following account of the unfolding of Buonarroti's career, I hope to satisfy some of this curiosity. I hope also to illustrate the vital role played in human affairs not only by causes to which some of our contemporaries are still committed, but also by causes which no longer have the power to kindle enthusiasm and which, therefore, provide a more exciting challenge to the historical imagination.

The Formative Years (1761-1795)

The adherents of a rising movement have a strong sense of liberation even though they live and breathe in an atmosphere of strict adherence to tenets and commands. . . . The experience of vast change . . . conveys a sense of freedom, even though the changes are executed in a frame of strict discipline. It is only when the movement has passed its active stage and solidifies into a pattern of stable institutions that individual liberty has a chance to emerge. The shorter the active phase, the more will it seem that the movement itself rather than its termination made possible the emergence of individual freedom.

Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer*, p. 31

Filippo Michele Buonarroti was born in Pisa on November 11, 1761. His mother, Giulia Bizzarini, was a Siennese noblewoman.¹ His father, Leonardo, came of a distinguished family which belonged to the "patrician order of Florence according to the decree of May 17, 1751."² His grandfather, Filippo, had won distinction both as a jurist who served Cosimo III and as an author of several works in classical archaeology.³ Buonarroti could boast among other ancestors of a member of the Council of One Hundred in 1295 and also of the great Michelangelo from whose brother, Buonaroto (1477-1528),

¹ Frugoni, "Formazione dell'egualitario Buonarroti," *Humanitas* (1948), p. 471.

² "Buonarroti," *Enciclopedia Storico-Nobiliaire Italiana* (Milan, 1929), II, 208.

³ Filippo Buonarroti (1661-1733), *Osservazioni Istoriche Sopra Alcuni Medaglioni Antichi* (Rome, 1698); *Osservazioni sopra alcuni Frammenti di Vasi Antichi* (Florence, 1716).

the line was descended.⁴ This long line of magistrates and jurists, stretching back to the thirteenth century, was to die out with Filippo Michele's only son Cosimo, a jurist and counselor of state who, at his death in 1858, bequeathed to the city of Florence his family house on the Via Ghibellina with its valuable collection of manuscripts and *objets d'art*.⁵ Cosimo's career is worth noting, because it offers an objective indication of the precise social position into which his father had been born. The contents of the Buonarroti Gallery suggest the rich heritage which was Buonarroti's birthright.⁶

Filippo Michele seems to have received the typical upbringing accorded a patrician youth in his day.⁷ He probably attended a Jesuit school—until the order was suppressed in Tuscany in 1773. "I was superstitious and badly raised up to twelve years of age."⁸ He excelled in his studies of mathematics and music—both his talent for abstraction and his great musical gifts were to be further developed in the course of his life. In 1773, his father obtained for him a position as page at the court of the Archduke Peter Leopold, whose reign (1765–1790) was to give Tuscany "perhaps the best government of Europe" according to Albert Sorel.⁹ (Buonarroti was later to describe this regime of one of the first European princes to abolish the death penalty, the use of torture, the confiscation of criminal property, and the Inquisition as "the harshest despotism.")¹⁰

⁴ See genealogical chart in J. A. Symonds, *The Life of Michelangelo* (London, n.d.), II, Appendix.

⁵ *Enciclopedia Storico-Nobiliare*, p. 208.

⁶ See *Guide to the Buonarroti Gallery, Via Ghibellina*, No. 64 (Florence, 1891).

⁷ Most of this early biographical material was provided by Giuseppe Romano-Catania, *Filippo Buonarroti* (Milan, 1902), and is summed up by Frugoni, "Formazione dell'egualitario Buonarroti," *Humanitas* (1948), 970–982.

⁸ Cited by Georges Weill, "Philippe Buonarroti, 1761–1837," *Revue Historique* (1901), LXXVI, 241.

⁹ A. Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1885), I, 390.

¹⁰ Cited by Armando Saitta, *Filippo Buonarroti: Contributi alla Storia della sua Vita e del suo Pensiero* (Rome 1951), I, 3 from Buonarroti's "confession of faith" contained in the *Débats du Procès Instruit par la Haute-Cour de Justice, séant à Vendôme, contre Drouet, Baboeuf et autres* (Paris, 1797), III, hereafter cited as *Débats*. The description above of the Archduke's régime

At the age of seventeen, he became a law student at the University of Pisa. This university, along with the court of the Austrian Archduke, had become a center of that reforming spirit that made Tuscany, along with several other areas, an energetic exception to the slothful and apathetic climate attributed by historical tradition to much of eighteenth-century Italy.¹¹ There he enthusiastically absorbed much of the atmosphere of the Enlightenment guided by two professors: Christoforo Sarti, a disciple of Locke and Condillac, who taught philosophy, and Giovanni Maria Lampredi, a professor of public law, who directed his study of French political thought. One authority has speculated that Lampredi's unorthodox views on international law, which owed much to Mably as well as to Puffendorf and Grotius, may have left a lasting mark on his pupil.¹² Another has cited Buonarroti's own testimony as to Sarti's influence: "he accustomed me to the rigors of reasoning, drew my attention to an awareness of my position and to the fundamental principles of the social order."¹³ It was under this tutelage that Buonarroti encountered his favourite author. "Rousseau was my master." With regard to the gospel according to Jean-Jacques, Buonarroti became and remained a fundamentalist.

The dogmas of equality and of popular sovereignty inflamed my being. From then on I had the deep conviction that it was the duty of a man of means to work towards the overthrow of the social system which oppresses civilised Europe in order to substitute an order which would conserve the dignity and happiness of all.¹⁴

Of course this description of his prerevolutionary sentiments by a conspirator producing a confession of faith in the partisan atmos-

is in R. J. Kerner, *Bohemia in the Eighteenth Century. A Study in Political, Economic, and Social History with Special Reference to the Reign of Leopold II 1790-1792* (New York, 1932), pp. 55-56.

¹¹ Frugoni, "Formazione dell'egualitario Buonarroti," *Humanitas* (1948), p. 473n.

¹² Delio Cantimori, *Utopisti e Riformatori Italiani (1794-1847)* (Florence, 1943), pp. 131-132.

¹³ P. Onnis, "Filippo Buonarroti, la Congiura di Babeuf, e il Babuvismo," Extract from *Nuova Rivista Storica* (1952), XXXVI, 7.

¹⁴ Cited in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 3, from the *Débats*.

phere of a courtroom constitutes a most prejudiced testimony. But it is testimony that the facts of his life seem to support.

This experience as a law student—conversion is perhaps the only adequate characterization—seems to have been quite different from that transitory rebellion which has led many young men to dream of revenge against a mature society whose fruits they are still denied—a “sour grapes” attitude which can often be sweetened by a taste of worldly success. After receiving his doctorate of law in four years, Buonarroti went to Florence where he married a young noblewoman, Elisabetta de’ Conti, who was to bear him four daughters and one son. In recognition of his literary talents, he was made a Chevalier of Saint Stephen by the Grand Duke whose patronage would have assured him of a brilliant position at the Tuscan Court. But he was already proof against the temptations of success. It is possible that, about 1786, he joined a Florentine lodge where, under the guise of practicing the Scottish rites of the Masonic Order, the Illuminati (founded by Adam Weishaupt in 1776) may have been propagating their radical interpretation of the *Discours sur L’Inégalité* and the *Contrat Social*.¹⁵ Although his initiation into Weishaupt’s order remains conjectural, his later familiarity with it is certain and was to be of paramount importance in his future development.

In 1786, the Florentine government found it necessary to raid his library and confiscate a number of works, published in France, containing anticlerical and masonic propaganda.¹⁶ He was spared further punishment through the intervention of his father. The following year found him unrepentant, as the editor of a radical journal, the *Gazette Universale*.¹⁷ In the United Provinces, “where

¹⁵ Carlo Francovich, “Gli Illuminati di Weishaupt e l’idea egualitaria in alcune società segrete del Risorgimento,” *Movimento Operaio* (July–August, 1952), IV, 575–576. See p. 46, *infra*, for argument against this possibility.

¹⁶ A list of the confiscated books is given by G. Romano-Catania, *Filippo Buonarroti*, p. 9. The titles—such as *La Cruauté Religieuse*, *La Fausseté des Miracles*, *Le Parnasse Libertin*—suggest the tenor of Buonarroti’s anticlerical opinions at this time.

¹⁷ On this journal and question of whether Buonarroti also published a French journal: “L’Ami de la Liberté Italienne” during the 1787–89 period,

the bitter factional conflict between the Republicans representing the richer merchants and the Patriots representing the more radical petty bourgeoisie was keeping the country in constant turmoil," he found a cause which enlisted both his francophile sympathies and egalitarian views.¹⁸ His defense of the Dutch "patriots," who were supported by France, against the Stadtholder of the United Provinces led the Dutch Consul to make a formal protest to the Grand Duke.¹⁹

In 1789 he found the cause which was to engage his sympathies for the rest of his life and hailed the debut of the Revolution (it was not bliss, it was very heaven in that dawn for him to be alive!) in an Italian journal. This indiscretion resulted in his departure for Corsica in the fall of that year.

I devoured the news from France; I compared the discourses of the patriots of the Constituent Assembly with the precepts of Jean Jacques and asked myself: *Is all in earnest for the beginning of the reign of justice?*

I had been waiting a long time for the signal, it was given. Some of the articles of the first *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* confirmed my hopes and succeeded in inflaming me. Here they are:

"Men are born and remain free and equal in their rights."

"The end of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man; these rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression."

"The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the people."

I needed no more to convince me that all those who sensed the obligations that tied them to humanity were being called upon to work effectively for its enfranchisement. I swore to defend liberty. Abandoning my family and belongings, I gave myself over to the Corsicans, neighbors of my native land, famous for their ancient and perpetual fight against oppression.²⁰

see A. Lehning, "Buonarroti's Ideas on Communism and Dictatorship," *International Review of Social History* (1957), II, 266.

¹⁸ For citation see Leo Gershoy, *From Despotism to Revolution, 1763-1789, The Rise of Modern Europe*, ed. William L. Langer (New York, 1944), pp. 190-191.

¹⁹ Frugoni, "Formazione dell'egualitario Buonarroti," *Humanitas* (1948), p. 476.

²⁰ Cited in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 4, from the *Débats*.

In Corsica, Buonarroti's activities led the Florentine government to exile him from his native province and the French authorities to reward him by putting him in charge of local ecclesiastical affairs and government lands. As a Corsican bureaucrat, his zealous espousal of anticlerical measures antagonized the faithful in Bastia to the extent of endangering his life in a local insurrection in 1791.²¹ He was dragged through the streets by an angry mob and shipped off to Leghorn, where he was imprisoned by the Tuscan police. On this occasion, at any rate, the Grand Duke did not behave as a harsh despot. At the request of the Corsican authorities, Buonarroti was released and returned to Corsica where the Departmental Council commended him for "his zeal and activity in the cause of liberty." A characteristic interlude of travel followed this incident. Returning to Florence, he was arrested and managed to escape to Genoa; from there he was expelled and found refuge once again in Corsica. During this period, he was constantly engaged in revolutionary agitation, organizing local clubs, working for the French government in various capacities while revealing no concern at all about the measures taken against him by the Italian authorities. It is probable that he was at this time already beginning to organize secret patriotic cells throughout Northern Italy, thus sowing seeds that would ripen four decades later.²² In September 1792, his services in editing a journal "formed on the most pure principles of liberty and equality," in founding a popular society, and in distinguishing himself "by his firm insistence on the execution of the law" again brought approval from the Departmental Council.²³

This Corsican period has become a focal point for those who emphasize (and distort, in my opinion) Buonarroti's ideological

²¹ For full account of this episode, see Paul Robiquet, "Buonarroti: Une Émeute Clericale à Bastia en Juin, 1791," *La Révolution Française* (1908), XLIV, 490-504.

²² Cantimori, *Utopisti e Riformatori*, p. 136.

²³ Buonarroti edited his journal under the curious Jewish alias: "Abraham Levi Salomon." The first issue appeared on April 30, 1790. Many of the issues have been published in their original Italian with French annotations by A. Ambrosi-Rossi. See "Giornale Patriottico de Ph. Buonarrotti [sic] 1791-1792," *Bulletin de la Société des Sciences Historiques et Naturelles de la Corse* (1919), XXXVI, 1-95; (1921), XLI, 96-268.

position as a Babouvist egalitarian. Signor Galante Garrone, for example, maintains that Buonarroti's experience with the specific socio-economic reality of Corsican rural life, during a period when social tensions were made acute by the enclosure movement, made possible a revolutionary transformation of the "utopian" theories of Morelly and Mably. This experience enabled Buonarroti to visualize the "heavenly city" of these eighteenth-century philosophers brought down to earth, to rest on the concrete foundations of distributive socialism.²⁴ Utopia thus became a blueprint for the future. In his discussion of this interpretation, Georges Lefebvre seems to concur. Their reading of Rousseau, Mably, and Morelly as well as of Plato, and other classical authorities, contributed to the formation of Buonarroti's and Babeuf's "communist ideas," according to M Lefebvre; but to account for the "originality" of their role, one must look to the "popular" origins of their thought. "Babeuf and Buonarroti passed from meditation to action; the distance was great; they traversed it because certain characteristics of an essentially rural economy and of a peasant mentality, associated with this economy, came to their aid." M Lefebvre does not analyze the possible consequences of Buonarroti's encounter with the Corsican agrarian system, however. To the contrary, after briefly reviewing what Signor Galante Garrone has to say on this point, M Lefebvre merely notes that Babeuf's experience in Picardy was "at all events, much more pertinent."²⁵ Thus he sets the stage for his masterful account of the development of Babeuf's ideas "not...in the form of a system which is dogmatically conceived and with perfect coherence, but as a flux where millenarian communism, transmitted by books, is enriched and enlivened by the observation of society and under the pressure of events."²⁶ This account actually stresses the pressure of events during the French Revolution rather more than it does the agrarian system in Picardy and it says nothing at all about Buonarroti and Corsica.

²⁴ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e Babeuf* (Turin, 1948), pp. 54-57.

²⁵ Georges Lefebvre, "Les Origines du Communisme de Babeuf," *Etudes sur la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1954), p. 305.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

It is tempting to pass over this interpretation for it involves too many historiographically "loaded" questions, centering on revolutionary causation and the origins of modern communism, to be adequately examined here. Unfortunately, the "behavioral sciences" have not yet fashioned analytical tools that are sufficiently sharp to cut through the tangled web woven by historians around these matters. Not a short cut but a confusing detour is provided by Karl Mannheim's discussion of the "social differentiation of the historical time sense," which relates eighteenth-century utopian socialism to the "petty bourgeois reactionary mentality of its bearers" and makes the survival of medieval communal land-holding systems partly responsible for the location of this utopia in the distant past.²⁷

Current historical practices sanction the noncommittal mention of all possible "factors" in a given historical situation. Therefore, the least troublesome course is to suggest that his experience with the communal existence of the Corsican peasantry may have been one important factor in Buonarroti's ideological development. Yet one cannot help but wonder whether Buonarroti's subsequent position would have been substantially altered if he had gone to Marseilles or to Bordeaux, for example, rather than to Corsica and had thus encountered an entirely different socio-economic situation.

It seems more than likely that he sympathized, as a Corsican administrator, with the peasant resistance to the wealthy landowners who were profiting from the enclosure movement, in the same spirit as he had earlier, as a Tuscan journalist, sympathized with the Dutch "patriots" against the Stadtholder of the United Provinces. Elsewhere he would have become embroiled in other local factional issues. There is nothing to suggest that the enclosure movement preoccupied him later on. He certainly did not become the champion of the peasantry. Later, when he searched for actual examples of his ideal "community of goods and labor" he would refer to Jesuit communities in Paraguay, to the Essenes and to the Spartans, but not to the economic realities of eighteenth-century Corsica. It is

²⁷ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia. An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, tr. L. Wirth and E. Shils (London, 1948), pp. 216n, 221n.

apparent that had he gone elsewhere, he would have missed the important opportunity to become acquainted with the Bonaparte family; apart from this sort of fortuitous unpredictable event, however, everything suggests that the course of his life and the development of his thought would have remained substantially unchanged had he arrived not in Corsica but on the mainland of France in 1789.

Thus the suggestion that the particular land-distribution pattern of eighteenth-century Corsica played a critical part—played indeed any part at all—in Buonarroti's personal development, seems to be rooted more in fidelity to Marxist dogma than in a judicious historical appraisal of Buonarroti's position, which had been fixed well before he left his native land. The only decisive reorientation in his remarkably long career that may have occurred shortly after that time, had a bearing on his religious views. Even before he left Italy, however, he may have already shifted, as a good Rousseauist must, from the negative anticlerical opinions of his student days to the moralistic cult of the Supreme Being, which he was so ardently to espouse for the rest of his days. Here as elsewhere, his intellectual development was markedly different from that of his future colleague, Babeuf. Here, as elsewhere, the focus of his vision was to be sharpened rather than diverted by the pressure of events during the Revolution. For, although the signal from France may have turned Buonarroti away from his books in 1789, it was nonetheless in terms of those books that it was decoded and that he regarded it as a summons to be heeded for the rest of his life.

He had, after all—as Signor Galante Garrone also points out—left Italy for Corsica with certain preconceptions about his destination. As a student in Pisa, he had learned to think of it as a focus for the liberal and “enlightened” sympathies of his day. Saliceti, who was to become the Corsican deputy for the Third Estate at the French National Assembly, and other Corsican patriots had been familiar figures at the University during his student days.²⁸ It was Corsica, moreover, that was described in the *Social Contract*

²⁸ On Saliceti and domestic political affairs in Corsica, see C. Ambrosi, “Pascal Paoli et la Corse de 1789 à 1791,” *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* (1955), II, 161–184.

as a virgin territory which only needed a wise legislator to turn it into a model that would "astonish" Europe.²⁹ Furthermore, Rousseau had already written and published his own *Project of a Constitution for Corsica* which had attempted to apply some favorite philosophic concepts to an actual geographic area. Signor Galante Garonne is certainly justified in drawing a distinction between the positions occupied by Rousseau and Buonarroti. The distance between a philosopher, acceding to a request from legislators to frame some ideal laws as a possible guide, and a governmental agent, attempting to force the adoption of certain policies, is, of course, an enormous one. But after all, this same distance separated every man of '93 from his favorite prerevolutionary author, and to close such a gap requires something other—something very different—than an intimate experience with the rural economy of Corsica. As an apostle of the political morality preached by Jean-Jacques, and soon to be practiced by Robespierre, Buonarroti remained remarkably consistent and the orthodoxy he espoused involved a definite subordination of the economic sphere to the political. Clearly he was not acquainted with Marx's intuition concerning modes of production. But he probably was familiar with Rousseau's intuition of the basic role played by political regime: "I had come to see that everything was radically connected with politics and that, however one proceeded, no people would be other than the nature of its government made it."³⁰

It was as an apostle of something quite different from land reform that he accompanied an expedition to Saint Pierre and Sardinia in January 1793, armed as a good Jacobin missionary with a "sword in one hand, the Declaration of Rights in the other," to convert the infidel islanders and to provide them with a "Code de la Nature."³¹ Indeed his activities during this period suggest how the term "propagande" (which, before the Revolution, had signified a

²⁹ J. J. Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social*, ed. C. E. Vaughan (Manchester, 1918), book II, chap. 10, p. 44. It is only fair to note that Galante Garrone makes these same remarks himself; see *Buonarroti e Babeuf*, pp. 52-54.

³⁰ *The Confessions of Jean Jacques Rousseau*, The Modern Library (New York, 1945), p. 417.

³¹ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 7.

particular congregation devoted to the spreading of the Gospel)³² had acquired its modern overtones. This crusade was followed by a trip to Paris to plead for the union of Saint Pierre with France, to denounce the activities of Paoli (his stand on this burning issue had brought him into a friendly contact with the Bonapartes that was to prove useful in a few years), and to have his ambition to become naturalized as a French citizen realized by decree of the Convention on May 27, 1793.³³ The fall of the Girondins and the subsequent drafting of the Constitution of 1793 reinforced his enthusiasm for the victorious faction. He attended meetings at the Jacobin Club on the Rue Saint Honoré and paid homage to Robespierre at the Duplays' house. (His position as a member of Robespierre's innermost circle of friends, who improvised family concerts with Lebas, gave music lessons to the Duplay daughters, and frequently dropped by in the evenings to play on the clavichord, tunes hummed by Robespierre, seems to have been assumed retrospectively. Like so many other legends woven around the men of '93, the myth of Buonarroti's intimacy with Robespierre may be traced to the remarkable memory of Elisabeth Duplay-Lebas and to its subsequent embellishments in the historical romances of Lamartine and Hamel.)³⁴

Once again, Signor Galante Garrone interprets this Parisian phase as another step in the making of a Babouvist egalitarian, this time in terms of contact with the most resolute terrorists, with the economic legislation of the Terror, with the embryonic "class struggle" and the Parisian "masses."³⁵ Once again, the evidence seems only to

³² F. Brunot, *Histoire de la Langue Française* (Paris, 1937), IX, 628.

³³ His petition for citizenship on April 28, 1793 appeared in the *Moniteur*. See Weill, "Philippe Buonarroti," *Revue Historique*, LXXVI, 247.

³⁴ The probable (slight) degree of Buonarroti's actual acquaintance with Robespierre has been well analyzed by Lehning, "Buonarroti's Ideas . . .," *International Review of Social History* (1957), II, 267-268n. The most important single source for the oral legend furnished by Elisabeth Duplay-Lebas is the work of Paul Coutant, under the pseudonym of "Stéfane-Pol," *Autour de Robespierre: Le Conventionnel Le Bas D'Après des Documents Inédits et les Mémoires de sa Veuve* (Paris, 1901). See pp. ix, 84, 97-98 for references to "Buonarroti" [sic].

³⁵ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e Babeuf*, pp. 68-69.

suggest a reaffirmation of Buonarroti's position as a Jacobin "true believer" of the type epitomized by Anatole France's portrait of Evariste Gamelin in *Les Dieux Ont Soif*. Buonarroti's denunciation in *La Conjuración de Corse*, an anti-Paoli polemic written in 1793, of the "coalition of unfaithful deputies, treacherous administrators, aristocrats, rich egoists, and all the enemies of equality" that infested Corsica does not necessarily mark him as a member of an aberrant radical fringe; its tone was quite in keeping with the rhetoric that came daily from the most celebrated member of the Committee of Public Safety.³⁶ What, indeed, could be more in keeping with the orthodox Jacobin "line" than to attack as enemies of the people, the followers of a Corsican patriot who objected to Parisian domination and looked to England for support? There is no evidence at all that Buonarroti allied himself with any of the factions that "deviated" to the left of the Robespierrists. To the contrary, he had remained free of all entanglements with any Parisian faction.³⁷ It is clear from his later work that he regarded the different revolutionary sects in the light of an absolute fidelity to the likes and dislikes of the Incorruptible, whose cult of civic virtue and republican discipline led him, as it led Buonarroti, to denounce luxury as well as special privilege.

In its constant punctuation by arrests, expulsions, deportations and imprisonments, Buonarroti's career exhibited the same consistency as it did in his devotion to the Mountain and the Constitution of 1793. Returning to Corsica to act as a commissioner for the Executive Council, he was temporarily imprisoned by the anti-Jacobin party in Lyons. The following year saw him travelling between Paris and Corsica in his persistent campaign to oust Paoli, taking part as an apostle and propagandist in the siege of Toulon, and finally obtaining, from Augustin Robespierre and Saliceti, the post of national commissioner for the conquered areas east of Menton. This position, which had been created by the occupation of Oneglia by French troops on April 12, 1794, involved the super-

³⁶ For citation, see Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e Babeuf*, pp. 68-69.

³⁷ This is noted by Pia Onnis, "Filippo Buonarroti, Commissario Rivoluzionario a Oneglia nel 1794-1795," *Nuova Rivista Storica* (1939), XXIII, 372.

vision of approximately 35,000 inhabitants within the region of the Maritime Alps. It was to be retained by Buonarroti for almost a year and forms a hitherto rather obscure period in his life that has been brilliantly clarified by Pia Onnis.³⁸

Buonarroti's primary concern as an administrator was to evoke enthusiasm for the new way of life that was being established in France. Beginning with a characteristic flourish, proclaiming that "the French Revolution is the redemption of the human species proclaimed by the Evangelist," he went on to attempt to transform Oneglia into a center of revolutionary energy that would flow throughout all of Italy. Although he tried to enforce the typical economic legislation of the Revolutionary Government—the maximum, the prohibition of exports, the forced requisition of materials, the assignats, etc.—he was significantly distressed by its negative impact on his propaganda efforts and complained that, since the wealthy landowners had already emigrated from the occupied territories, the burden fell on an impoverished population whose economic grievances, which were aggravated by the constant abuses of military and profiteering functionaries, tended to counteract his valiant efforts to inspire a sense of civic devotion. His "greatest embarrassment," he wrote Massena, was this failure of the population to respond. He could find consolation only in recognizing that "the public spirit cannot be formed in one day" and bent his efforts toward a renovation of the educational system, training new teachers who were required to take loyalty oaths to the French Republic and the principles for which it stood, eventually setting up new primary and secondary schools to instruct the more malleable citizens of the future in the doctrines preached by Mably and Rousseau.³⁹ He also organized a "popular society." At the same

³⁸ The following account is drawn entirely from her article in *Nuova Rivista Storica* (1939) XXIII, 353-379, 477-499. See also Jacques Godechot's review article, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, (Oct.-Dec. 1949), XXI, 374-376.

³⁹ In addition to the *Contrat Social* and excerpts from Mably's work, Buonarroti's list of approved schoolbooks included such titles as *Eléments de Morale Républicaine*, *L'A B C du jeune Républicain*, *Livre Indispensable aux Enfants de La Liberté de Musique Républicaine*, *Almanach de la République*

time, of course, he was attempting to uproot the "corrupt" and unregenerate elements, focusing his attack on the clergy and the aristocracy. A committee of *Surveillance* was instituted and even a Revolutionary Tribunal which, however, came too late to function, having been organized only a week before 9 Thermidor. "While you destroy the enemies from without," he wrote to Massena, "I guillotine the traitors from within." The memory of this aspect of his administration was to be perpetuated by the principal historian of the region who was to portray him in the somewhat distorted guise of a bloodthirsty terrorist.⁴⁰ All his efforts notwithstanding, the people seemed to cling to the errors of their old ways; the citizens of Oneglia could be persuaded to agree to a resolution that proposed union with France only on the condition that their church, which had been transformed into a hospital, would be restored to its original function.

It is ironic that Buonarroti, who was later to describe the fall of Robespierre as the disappointment of the hopes of all mankind, was permitted to continue at his post, after receiving a clean bill of political health from the "purified" popular society, and to pursue his duties with his customary zeal for seven full months after the executions of 10 Thermidor. It is ironic but it is also indicative of the relative unimportance of his position. The Thermidorean government had too much unfinished business in France to make possible close supervision of the activities of minor functionaries abroad. It was indeed as an advance sentinel of a revolution in Italy rather than as a rear-guard defender of the first Republic in France that Buonarroti's performance in Oneglia was to be historically significant. He continued to work in obscurity until finally his illegal confiscation of lands belonging to a Genoese aristocrat brought him to the attention of the authorities who recalled him

Française, Décadis des Cultivateurs, Cour d'études and Logique by Condillac, etc. See Onnis, *Nuova Rivista Storica* (1939), XXIII, 483-484.

⁴⁰ This historian, G. M. Pira, dwells on the execution of two French émigré priests who were seized on a Danish ship in defiance of international law. But Buonarroti was not responsible for this incident according to Onnis, *Nuova Rivista Storica* (1939), XXIII, 374n.

to Paris and eventually placed him in the prison of Plessis in March 1795.

The prison of Plessis—an institution which, during the 1790's, resembled in many respects Sainte-Pélagie in the 1830's and '40's⁴¹—completed the education Buonarroti had begun at the University of Pisa. It provided that indispensable period of quiet meditation on his experiences during the preceding turbulent years and facilitated an exchange of ideas on theory and tactics with most of his future colleagues who were, like him, soon to gain prominence because of their association with a fellow-prisoner, Babeuf.⁴² The importance of this inevitable initiation into prison life in the personal development of the professional revolutionist has often been stressed. The psychological attitudes engendered by incarceration—by a forced withdrawal from the usual pursuits and affairs of the variegated world and by an inflexible and monotonous pattern of daily existence in the company of like-minded comrades—would remain long after the prisoner had emerged into the more open society whose enemy he had frequently become. Geffroy clearly regards the experience of being a prisoner as a critical factor in Blanqui's development.⁴³ "Daniel Stern" attributes the regrettable tendency of the republicans of 1848 to ignore complex realities in favor of some "immutable ideal of abstract justice" partly to the fantasies engendered while serving their terms.⁴⁴ Buonarroti himself painted a retrospective picture of his existence at Plessis that has the flavor of a description of a community of early Christians:

⁴¹ On Plessis, see G. Pariset, *La Révolution 1792-1799*, Histoire de la France Contemporaine, ed. Lavissee (Paris, 1920), II, 308-309. On Sainte-Pélagie, see classic description by Georges Weill, *Histoire du Parti Républicain en France (1814-1870)* Paris, 1928, pp. 72-74.

⁴² A remarkably long list of the future Babouvists Buonarroti encountered in this prison is given in *Buonarroti's History of Babeuf's Conspiracy for Equality with the Author's Reflections on the Causes and Character of the French Revolution and his Estimate of the Leading Men and Events of that Epoch*. Tr. by "Bronterre," London, 1836 (hereafter: Buonarroti, Bronterre), p. 40.

⁴³ Gustave Geffroy, *L'Enfermé* (Paris, 1897), *passim*.

⁴⁴ Marie Agoult (pseud., Daniel Stern), *Histoire de la Révolution de 1848* (Paris, n.d.), p. 181.

The prisons were at that time the scene of a spectacle as affecting as it was singularly new. The victims, whom the aristocracy had plunged into them, lived frugally in the most intimate fraternity, honoured one another for their chains and poverty, devoted themselves to work and study, and conversed only on the calamities of their common country and on the means of bringing them to an end. The civic songs with which they made the air resound, caused to congregate every evening around these dismal abodes a crowd of citizens whom curiosity attracted there, or the congeniality of their sentiments with those of the prisoners.⁴⁵

One should note as particularly characteristic, his remark that this scene was "singularly new," with the implication that earlier revolutionary prisons filled with aristocratic suspects, offered a less edifying spectacle.

The prison of Plessis was indeed a much more likely place than rural Corsica to provide Buonarroti with an actual experience of that community solidarity, that communion with a "general will" which he was later to incorporate into his version of the brave new world that had been aborted by the Thermidorean coup. Although this experience undoubtedly left a mark on his personal development, however, it should not be overrated. After all he went into the prison as an ardent disciple of Rousseau and Robespierre, whose enthusiasm neither the opportunity for worldly success nor experience in the role of a responsible functionary seemed to dampen. The fact that he did not alter his views in accordance with the change in regimes, upon his release in October 1795 (after the events of 13 Vendémiaire), may have been in part due to the effect of his incarceration, which insulated him against the Thermidorean reaction and even strengthened his faith in the shattered Republic of Virtue. Nonetheless, his previous record suggests that he would have persisted in his efforts to restore the regime of '93 and that he would have been numbered among those who formed the "queue de Robespierre"⁴⁶ without the experience of Plessis.

His emergence from prison found him in much the same position

⁴⁵ Buonarroti (Bronterre), p. 43.

⁴⁶ On the origin of this expression in the tale that Robespierre at his death had said "On va me couper la tête mais on ne me coupera pas la queue," see Brunot, *Langue Française*, IX, 844-845.

he had been in during 1787-1789, still eager to help in the regeneration of mankind, still in the attitude of "tense expectation" that Mannheim describes as characteristic of the "chiliast."⁴⁷ But the government of the Directory was as unpalatable in its way as had been the government of the Grand Duke of Tuscany and Buonarroti could no longer expect or merely hope for a signal from France. He had to take an active part in reconditioning the revolutionary tocsin himself. For under the Directory and the new Constitution, a policy of watchful waiting would only increase the historic distance between his day and that of the ideal Republic which had been on the verge of realisation in 1793-94. The conviction that Robespierre's fall represented a tragic renunciation of the only road to secular salvation but that tragedy could be turned into triumph, that the direction of events after 9 Thermidor could and would be reversed, provided the impetus for the formation of Buonarroti's new career. His extraordinary capacity for unquenchable enthusiasm and inflexible dogmatism were to make it possible for him to maintain the very same position forty years after Thermidor that he did in 1795.

⁴⁷ Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, p. 195.

The Launching of a New Career (1796—1823)

I. THE VOCATION

There is no other man who is absorbed by the revolution twenty-four hours a day, who has no other thoughts but the thought of revolution, and who when he sleeps, dreams of nothing but the revolution.

Alexrod, speaking of Lenin in 1910

Buonarroti was thirty-four years old when he emerged from Plessis to rededicate himself to the service of humanity. He had successfully divested himself of every private "interest," whether emotional or pecuniary, that tended to interfere with the self-discipline required of a public servant. He had cut himself off from his family and now had neither fortune nor position.¹ He was penniless and unemployed. From this time until his death, his daily bread was to be earned mainly by giving music lessons (in minor as in major matters he was a consistent disciple of Rousseau) supplemented occasionally by teaching Italian to young foreigners, although sometimes these language lessons were devoted instead to initiating young converts into the "most worthy of all careers"—as Buonarroti called the time-consuming profession that brought an honorable and disinterested practitioner no financial rewards. Curiously enough in view of his profession, he was also to receive, from time to time, a pittance from the authorities. During his last years he was to depend on his

¹ Evidence that he was in touch, toward the end of his life, with one of his brothers, Michelangiolo, and with a nephew, Michelangelo, the son of his brother Carlo, is given by Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 34-35.

wealthy friends. As one might expect of a consistent Rousseauist, his personal life became increasingly disorderly and difficult to untangle. His wife remained with him while he was in Corsica to give birth to his son Cosimo, in Bastia in 1790. She reappeared briefly to plead for her husband's life after his arrest as a Babouvist. Sometime after 1793, probably in the fall of 1794, he met Teresa Poggi—a Genoese woman of Corsican ancestry, who divorced her husband in 1796 to become Buonarroti's companion for the next twenty-odd years.² The stormy end of their relationship will be related later.

The course of his professional life, like the course of his personal life, was to become increasingly complicated after his emergence from the prison of Plessis. After 1795, he was to play, whenever possible, a dual role—his action would be conducted simultaneously on the plane of open propaganda and on that of subterranean conspiracy. Soon after he was freed, he became a prominent member of the Pantheon Society which held its first session on November 16, 1795. He was to preside at its final session on February 28, 1796, when the Society was dissolved under the auspices of his former acquaintance from Corsica, Napoleon Bonaparte.³ As a Pantheonist and thereafter as one of the three chiefs, along with Babeuf and Darthé, of the Insurrectional Committee, Buonarroti played a major role in the “conspiracy of equals.” This facet of his existence is so well known and so fully elaborated by historical exegesis that it will be passed over here, save for one observation. Despite his explicit espousal of a “community of goods and labor” and his close alliance with Babeuf, Buonarroti never seems to have considered himself a “Babouvist.” Rather he always regarded himself, and his colleagues as well, as faithful Robespierrists.

Although he is best known for his role as a colleague of Babeuf's, who helped to draft manifestos, organize the secret resistance to the Directory, and who later became the chronicler of the affair; actually Buonarroti's most individual and special contribution to the

² Alessandro Natta, “La Compagna di Filippo Buonarroti,” *Movimento Operaio* (1955), VII, 121-123.

³ See Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 9.

"Conspiration des Egaux" was in an area that has been generally ignored by historians concerned with the Parisian conspiracy, namely that of foreign affairs.⁴ The victory of the French in Holland and the control of the Batavian Republic by the anti-Orange, "Patriot" party (whose cause Buonarroti had earlier espoused as a Tuscan journalist) furnished him with one important area of operation; the Italian campaign with another. The complicated course of Dutch affairs during 1795-96, which involved tangled diplomatic matters as well as internal dissension over the framing of the Constitution for the new Republic, cannot be traced here. It seems worth noting, however, that Buonarroti was in close contact with those Dutch Jacobins who opposed a federalist constitution and that he helped to co-ordinate the policy of the Parisian Babouvists with that of the Dutch ambassador Jacques Blauw, who was a leader of the insurrection that broke out in Amsterdam on May 8, 1796.⁵

At the same time that he was secretly involved in Dutch affairs, Buonarroti was more openly attempting to cast the as yet amorphous Italian policy of the Directory into a radical mold. His friendship with Saliceti and Joubert, as well as other contacts made when he had served as an official in Oneglia, gained him a hearing at the French foreign office. He advocated the co-ordination of French military action with local insurrections in a concerted effort to wrest a republican and unified Italy from the domination of Austria, the "corrupt" Sardinian and Neapolitan monarchies, and the "clerical tyranny" of the Papacy—invoking as ever, "the doctrine of the good Jean Jacques who, by refusing to give one people the right to enslave another, proved that a nation can and must destroy the government of its neighbor."⁶ His policy was actually realized (temporarily, of course, and on a very small scale) in Alba in April

⁴ Jacques Godechot, "Le Babouvisme et l'Unité Italienne (1796-1799)," *Revue des Etudes Italiennes* (1938), III, 259-283 is almost a pioneer study in this area.

⁵ See Godechot, "Unità Batava e Unità Italiana all'epoca dell Direttorio," *Archivio Storico Italiano* (1955), CXIII, 335-336.

⁶ See Buonarroti, "La Paix Perpetuelle avec les Rois," in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, Appendix F, 238-243.

1796 when the entrance of French troops under General d'Augereau set off a local insurrection followed by the proclamation of a municipal republic under the aegis of his Piedmontese refugee friends, Bonafous and Ranza.⁷ In fact, according to Jacques Godechot, it was largely due to Buonarroti's insistence during the early years of the Directory, that the idea of Italian unity was linked with the idea of social revolution with the resultant delay of the former for seventy-odd years.⁸

Probably this interpretation overcompensates for previous neglect of Buonarroti's role. His views, as Delio Cantimori has shown, were shared, were even anticipated by other Italian utopian thinkers like Enrico Michele L'Aurora; they had become a commonplace among Roman radicals in the 1790's.⁹ The insurrection in Alba was both unimportant and transient in its consequences. Nonetheless, when specifically applied to French policy toward Italy, M. Godechot's opinion does not seem too wide of the mark, especially when it is recalled that French policy toward Italy was still to be subjected to Buonarroti's intrigues more than thirty years later—after the July Revolution. As a native-born Italian who was also a naturalized French citizen, who had been developing extensive contacts with anti-Austrian, Francophile elements, and who had a background of experience as an administrator of an occupied zone, Buonarroti's opinions on the vexed Italian question carried some weight among French diplomats. In terms of their interests, foreign territory could serve as a useful breeding ground for a revolutionary fever that had to be kept in check at home. In 1796 the French foreign minister, Delacroix, did listen to Buonarroti and (perhaps partly just to get rid of a persistent nuisance) recommended him to Cacault, the "agent of the French Republic in Italy," as a man whose "zeal"

⁷ A. Saitta, "Buonarroti e la Municipalità Provisoria di Alba," *Belfagor* (Sept. 1948), pp. 587-596.

⁸ Review article, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (Jan.-Mar. 1953), XXV, 89.

⁹ Cantimori, *Utopisti e Riformatori*, pp. 55-56, 67, 85. See also Luigi Bulferreti, *Socialismo Risorgimentale* (Milan, 1949), which contains only a few, scattered references to Buonarroti.

and "intelligence" should prove useful.¹⁰ Cacault's response was not enthusiastic:

The Citizen Buonarroti... is a Florentine who has ample talent in Literature, and in Philosophy, who writes well enough and easily in his own tongue; for the rest, he knows neither the world nor its affairs, he has an ardent imagination, he finds himself in Paris in a needy state, he asks to be given a Mission whose vast objective is altogether undetermined, he indicates a general point of view, but how can he expect to realize any part of it? He could not hope to penetrate Italy... he is very well known and would be arrested anywhere—the Grand Duke has a letter from him, wherein he declares that the finest moment of his life would be when he saw the prince guillotined.¹¹

Mainly because the triumphant progress of Bonaparte's army was rapidly making obsolete their previous approaches to the Italian question, Cacault's superiors soon found themselves in agreement with him.¹²

This first phase of Buonarroti's double life was almost at an end in any case. The Minister of Foreign Affairs presented Cacault's letter to the Directory for consideration on May 2, 1796. Six days later, on May 8, even while the insurrection was breaking out in Amsterdam, Buonarroti was arrested along with his colleagues, and the dénouement of the Babeuf affair unfolded. According to a contemporary observer, Buonarroti distinguished himself during the trial by "his decency and urbanity."¹³ His speech in his defense before the High Court at Vendôme, however, was scarcely urbane in tone. This eloquent apologia culminated in the following pororation: "God of liberty, divine Jean-Jacques, thou who madest me disdain the delights of my paternal home, thou who hast initiated me into the mysteries of philosophy, thou who hast torn me from my country, from my family, from my friends... thou who

¹⁰ Letter of Delacroix to Cacault, dated 7 Germinal, Year IV (March 28, 1796), in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, Appendix A, p. 16.

¹¹ Letter of Cacault to Delacroix, dated 20 Germinal, Year IV (April 9, 1796), *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹² Letter of Delacroix to Cacault, dated 16 Floreal, Year IV (May 6, 1796), *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹³ Cited in Samuel Bernstein, *Buonarroti*, tr. by M. Gilles (Paris, 1949), p. 153.

hast enflamed me with the sacred love of virtue, redouble my courage and give my accents the force to destroy the sophisms of the enemies of a country whose foundations thou hast laid!"¹⁴

Along with five comrades, Buonarroti was condemned to deportation by the Vendôme Court. A humiliating voyage in an iron cage (an experience which was to be repeated by Blanqui in 1850) followed the verdict, ending in captivity in an island fortress near Cherbourg. Buonarroti's existence as a prisoner at Fort National was in marked contrast to his previous incarceration at Plessis. Among the six ex-collaborators in the "conspiracy of equals" a disharmony based on social inequalities prevailed. A schism between the educated, upper-class deportees, Buonarroti, Vadier, and Germain and the uneducated, lower-class prisoners, Blondeau, Cazin, and Moroy was aggravated by the special privileges accorded the former and denied the latter.¹⁵ Buonarroti was favored to the extent of being permitted to share his quarters with Teresa Poggi, whom he passed off as his wife, and who probably helped him to carry on his clandestine correspondence with the remnants of the neo-Jacobin organization in Paris.¹⁶

One reason for the longevity that enabled Buonarroti to pursue his path-breaking career (where so many other potential candidates were silenced by death or deportation to distant lands) was surely his luck or skill in making the right friends in high places—especially Bonaparte, of course, but also Réal, who had been the attorney for his defense, and the ubiquitous Fouché, who was to be helpful in obtaining his release. His escape from the fate met by the other two members of the Insurrectional Committee, however, did not lead him to change his way of life—or even to adopt a more cautious approach. To the contrary he continued to ply his dangerous trade from his prison chamber, urging those of his friends who were still at liberty, to make the reversal of the Vendôme verdict a *cause célèbre*—to intensify popular unrest by publicizing the con-

¹⁴ Cited in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 6-7n, from the *Débats*.

¹⁵ This phase of Buonarroti's career has been thoroughly treated by P. Robiquet, "Les Déportés Babouvistes au Fort National," *La Révolution Française* (June 14, 1912) XXXI, 481-509 from which the above account has been drawn.

¹⁶ See Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 43.

ditions at Cherbourg. It was characteristic that even as a prisoner he would focus his energies not on extricating himself from his personal predicament, but on exploiting that predicament to obtain a popular insurrection.

Buonarroti's dream of reversing the direction of events after Thermidor appeared to be actually within the realm of the possible after the coup of 18 Fructidor. The brief appearance of the "last Jacobins" on the French political stage, heralded by the opening of the Manège Club (which numbered among its members such old comrades as Drouet, Felix Lepelletier, Bodson, Didier, etc.) suggested to the prisoner that the sun of '93 might rise soon again.¹⁷ But it was a false dawn. A letter from Réal pointed out that the times were out of joint for extremists.

At this moment, to attempt to ameliorate the situation, would make it worse. The legislative body hears, with an equal horror, your names and those of the apostles of Royalism . . . it will have nothing to do with extremes because it knows that one is only a part of society in order to be protected from the persecutions of the most powerful, and to make revolutions without ceasing is an evil more dangerous than to sleep forever the slumber of slaves . . .¹⁸

Réal and Buonarroti were at opposite poles, as far as political temperament went. The latter was an exception to the political rules that enabled so many of the administrators of 1793 to hold office under the Empire. Undaunted by Réal's advice not to press his case for revision, he addressed his comrades of the Manège Club, urging them to present his petition to the legislative body in the interests not of his personal freedom but of the propaganda possibilities that could be exploited to further the "cause of democracy."¹⁹

¹⁷ On this phenomenon see A. Aulard, "Les Derniers Jacobins," *Etudes et Leçons sur la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1913), VII, 84-113; A. Meynier, *Les Coups d'Etat du Directoire* (Paris, 1932), III, 12-163; G. Pariset, *La Révolution 1792-1799*, II, 419-421.

¹⁸ Cited in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 38. Saitta deduces that Réal is the author of this letter on the basis of its handwriting, etc.

¹⁹ Letter dated 20 Fructidor, Year VII (Sept. 6, 1799), Saitta, II, 40. According to Saitta, this letter is unsigned and probably was dictated, not written, by Buonarroti.

Even as Buonarroti was writing, Napoleon's star was ascending and the following years allowed little scope for public action by a man who had the reputation of being an unrepentant "buveur de sang." (He had not, even as a prisoner, relinquished his double life, however, and was to accomplish a good deal in his conspiratorial role.) The relative inaction which characterized Buonarroti's career as an agitator and propagandist under the Consulate and Empire bears witness to Napoleon's success in dampening, even temporarily extinguishing, the revolutionary fire that had been lit during the First Republic—a success that neither his Bourbon nor Orleanist successors were able to duplicate. One of Buonarroti's many petitions for release addressed to Napoleon noted that "we implore neither indulgence nor oblivion; we invoke, with a loud voice, revision and justice."²⁰ It was precisely a combination of indulgence with a deaf ear to the "loud voice" that characterized Napoleon's policy toward Buonarroti. The latter's many petitions for release (based on the rather tactless grounds that if the law of 27 Germinal, upon which the prisoners' condemnation rested, had any validity at all after the coup of 18 Brumaire, the Consuls themselves deserved death or deportation) were ignored. At the same time, as First Consul and later as Emperor, Napoleon treated this difficult friend of the family with a certain benevolence.

When, through Fouché's good offices, the prisoner was transferred from Fort National to easier conditions on the island of Oleron in March 1800, he was also granted a subsidy of three francs per day. In December 1802, he was transferred to Sospello in the Maritime Alps where, according to his later account, he was able to lay the foundations for his cosmopolitan secret society while at the same time playing the role of a model prisoner for the authorities. Later he was to say of this period: "however closely I was watched by the police, I never lost sight of the sacred end to which I had committed myself when I left Florence."²¹ Considering his position as a prisoner, he proved remarkably hard to please. The "fanatic

²⁰ Cited in Saitta, I, 47, n32.

²¹ Cited by Saitta, I, 82, n13, from Andryane, *Souvenirs de Genève* (Brussels, 1899), pp. 186–187.

and anti-French spirit" of the natives of Sospel led him to plead several times with Fouché and Réal "that I be given permission to go and hide my existence in the country of Jean-Jacques . . . I prefer Geneva as there they are French, Calvinist, enlightened."²² His pleas were granted in 1806 and for the next fifteen years (interrupted only by a brief interlude at Grenoble, 1813-14) Geneva was to be the scene of his double life—to the consternation of the prefect of Lemman who repeatedly wrote Paris for permission to expel him.

In 1811 a complaint noted that, under the name of Camille, Buonarroti had become a "venerable" of the masonic lodge of the "Amis Sincères" giving monthly orations at this lodge's celebration of the period *fêtes* established by the Jacobins. According to a Swiss historian of Free Masonry in Geneva, the Amis Sincères were not true Masons.

Their spirit was far removed from the true spirit of the order which in the 18th and 19th centuries, in most countries, was respectful of the established forms and of government. The Amis Sincères of 1811 were masonically constituted in appearance in order to have a pretext for their meetings, in order to conspire. For it is important to note that the imperial regime was not at all hostile to masonry which it had, so to speak, placed under its auspices.²³

In 1812 he figured in a military conspiracy organized by the anti-Bonapartist "Philadelphes" to assassinate Napoleon and re-establish the Constitution of 1793.²⁴ Among the group of troublesome foreigners who were "all Jacobins," he stood out as "the craziest" according to the harassed prefect,²⁵ whose suspicious reports, concerning Buonarroti's conspiratorial activities in Geneva, were to be read with an equal skepticism by Napoleon's officials and republican historians a century later, although recent research has confirmed their accuracy.

²² Weill, "Philippe Buonarroti," *Revue Historique*, LXXVI, 258-259.

²³ Cited by Maurice Pianzola, "Filippo Buonarroti in Svizzera," *Movimento Operaio* (1955), VII, 126.

²⁴ See Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 120.

²⁵ Weill, "Philippe Buonarroti," *Revue Historique*, LXXVI, 260.

After Malet's abortive coup of 1812, the Parisian authorities finally gave in to the prefect's insistence and transferred Buonarroti to Grenoble. A Genevan writer has given an amusing and interesting account, in his unpublished memoirs, of his experience as a young student in Grenoble which suggests the powerful impact of Buonarroti's personality at this time:

I came to this town, at the end of November 1813 to study law . . . and I had an idea of taking Italian lessons. I was referred to Buonarroti, who spoke, with the expression of a genius, the most pure Tuscan. As a teacher . . . he was impossible; always transported by his imagination and his fantasy, without caring in the least for the progress of his student . . . His instinctive destination lay rather in music . . . When I arrived at his home, I always found him at his piano, his long gray hair, shaggy and flowing, his shirt collar open, showing off to advantage a superb and truly inspired head. He . . . improvised . . . striking fire works from his instrument with long agile and powerful fingers, launching into songs without words which seemed to be the explosion of mysterious thoughts. I made a point of tearing him away to give his Italian lesson . . . the result was that soon he had persuaded me to take singing lessons. . . . It was no good my telling him I had a deaf ear and a poor voice. Buonarroti was persuaded . . . that he could teach me to sing. I think he would have succeeded thanks to his indomitable energy and the contagious power of his musical ardor.

But, alas! I only had six lessons thanks to the approach of the Austrians. . . . After that, I never again tried to continue this experiment that had been interrupted. . . . Buonarroti's sacred fire was alone capable of lighting in me some sparks of musical talent. As for Buonarroti himself, I never knew what became of him . . . His . . . figure is still in front of me as one of the most brilliant types of the Italian race and genius. He was a worthy descendant of Michelangelo.²⁶

Judging by Andryane's later similar experience, one may guess that the approach of the Austrians saved the reluctant student from future lessons in conspiracy as well.

Buonarroti had remained at Grenoble until the end of the Empire when he returned to Geneva, giving promises of tranquillity. His

²⁶ Jules Pictet de Serigny (1795-1888), *Souvenirs* cited in Pianzola, "Buonarroti in Svizzera," *Movimento Operaio*, VII, 128. The name is misspelled "Buonarrotti" throughout these *Souvenirs*.

pledges of good behavior led the prefect to remark of his difficult charge, "in order to realize them entirely, it would be necessary for his head to be reorganized. He considers himself, on one hand a Spartan—on the other as a political martyr."²⁷ Like so many other anti-Bonapartist republicans, Buonarroti offered his services to Napoleon after the latter's escape from Elba, but the end of the Hundred Days found him still in Geneva—that "sleepy, petty-bourgeois" city which was, from the time of Buonarroti's arrival until the establishment of the Ulyanov household there, to be one of the residences most favored by the professional revolutionist.

That Buonarroti's relative inactivity during the Consulate and Empire was more apparent than real, became clear after Waterloo when his personal secret society, the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits, founded around 1809, came to grips with Metternich's world. With the advent of the second Restoration, the previous tactical assumptions of the "queue de Robespierre" based on a single insurrectionary coup had obviously become outmoded. The historic gap between the pre-Thermidorean Republic and the contemporary world had widened into a gulf that one "great day" could no longer bridge. From the simple conspiratorial organization aiming at a single violent blow that would jolt humanity back on the right way to salvation, Buonarroti's tactical thinking had shifted toward the gradual erosion of a corrupt society by the "capillary" action of a secret "order" which would itself exemplify that purified community it was striving to obtain for all mankind. Recent research has shown that it was primarily the influence of the Illuminati of Bavaria that led Buonarroti to develop in the hostile environment of Empire and Monarchy a secret society based on a "metapolitical" distinction between the "civilian" society and the reforming order in its midst.²⁸

²⁷ Weill, "Philippe Buonarroti," *Revue Historique*, LXXVI, 262.

²⁸ See Saitta, I, 114-118, and following footnotes. As is noted in later discussion (see p. 55), after the discovery and dissolution of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits in 1823, Buonarroti formed a second secret society, the Monde which had a somewhat different structure. In the above discussion, the original society and its successor are treated as one and evidence from both used accordingly—the similarities seemed more important than the differences in this instance.

In its structure, as well as in its gradualist aim, the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits closely resembled the order founded by Weishaupt in 1776. Its hierarchy, its methods of initiation, its employment of the catechism, all were almost identical with the structure of the Illuminati. Even the name of Buonarroti's organization evoked Weishaupt's original name for his order—the Perfettibilisti; its aims suited Weishaupt's alias—"Spartacus."²⁹ The third and most secret credo of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits—that which referred to "the Republic" as "the sole proprietor" and "to creating a social patrimony out of the ruins of private property" as the "only regeneration aimed at by the philosophers"³⁰—was called the Areopagus. Among the Illuminati, the "areopagites" were the chosen few who alone knew the real aim of the order, the date of its foundation, and the name of its founder. It is this consideration which leads Dr. Lehning to regard the third credo as revealing "the real programme of the Society" and to cite approvingly Signor Saitta's opinion that it "provides . . . the thread of Ariadne for the understanding of Buonarroti's secret activities."³¹ This view, however, while it is illuminating must be adopted with caution; for it tends to disassociate Buonarroti's "real" program from its historical source. Signor Saitta has been careful to confine his opinion to Buonarroti's "secret activities" and Dr. Lehning is solely concerned with Buonarroti's secret societies. But, as soon will become evident, the ever widening gap between his day and that of the Ninth Thermidor accounted in a large part for the program of the Areopagus. And the conviction that the Jacobin leaders of 1793-94 had also been pursuing his "real programme" is at least as essential as is his secret creed, to an understanding of Buonarroti's career as a whole.

²⁹ Francovich, "Gli Illuminati," *Movimento Operaio*, IV, 556.

³⁰ Text given in Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 124, along with discussion of discovery of original text in Latin by Saitta and of English translation by J. P. de Prati in *An Autobiography Expressly Written for the Penny Satirist* (1837-39)—an important mine of Buonarrotian lore discovered by Galante Garrone and exploited by Lehning.

³¹ *Ibid.*; Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 92.

2. THE ORGANIZATION

"It appears to us perfectly practicable for the principal agents to institute, organize, and direct the clubs we look for without appearing to institute, organize, or direct anything."

Primary Instruction of the Secret Directory, addressed to each of the Principal Revolutionary Agents (1795) in Buonarroti (Bronterre) p. 311.

"You and I are the central committee."

"Everyone of these five...had...the fervent conviction that their quintet was only one of hundreds and thousands of similar groups...and that they all depended on some immense central but secret power which in its turn was intimately connected with the revolutionary movement all over Europe."

Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*

With the formation of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits the vocation of the professional revolutionist was transformed. Hereafter the "double life" was to be institutionalized and certain inevitable consequences followed from this socialization of what had to continue to be a highly secret vocation. The gulf between the members of the "order" and the society in which it existed—from which it had to recruit its members—made necessary a double level of existence within the "order" itself:

The secret society...is a democratic institution in its principles and in its end; but its forms and its organization cannot be those of a Democracy.

With respect to doctrines, which one assumes are held in a pure form by the leaders, they would be better preserved and transmitted by them, than by the crowd of initiated whose opinions, whatever one does, will never be altogether fixed nor uniform. With respect to action, whether preparatory or definitive, it is absolutely necessary that the impulse come from above and that all the rest obey. This society is nothing else but a secret army, destined to fight a powerful enemy.³²

³² "Idée Générale d'une Société Secrète," Excerpt from the notebook of the Monde, in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, Appendix C, p. 107. Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 116-117, somewhat confusingly attributes the title of this excerpt to the whole notebook published by Saitta.

Buonarroti thus instituted a complete separation between the lower echelons and the highest, between the ordinary members who were needed for propaganda purposes and the extraordinary leaders who alone knew the ideological goal, the organizational structure, and the actual personnel of the "order."

1. The end that a secret society sets itself is far removed from that which exists and necessarily contradicts the opinion of most of my contemporaries; thus it cannot be confided save in a small group of men.

2. The propagation of doctrines cannot be effective and successful action cannot be undertaken unless the people who co-operate in it are of a great number. Thus it is necessary to find a mode of association that, even while giving direction to a small number imbued with pure doctrines, guarantees the attachment and co-operation of a numerous class of initiates.³³

As Nechaev was to demonstrate later in the century, as Dostoevsky was to make memorable, and G. K. Chesterton, hilarious, these inescapable institutional requirements made it possible for a conspirator who was also a rogue to play confidence games with fellow conspirators. For absolute secrecy created a vacuum in which artificial secret societies could materialize. But, after all, non-existent societies were very economical of manpower. By spreading fear and suspicion they could be quite effective in eroding the social fabric. At the very least, they might keep the police harmlessly occupied.

The fact that a secret society might be almost more effective as a spectre than as an actuality, however, suggests that its level of existence was somewhat removed from concrete reality. As a member of a secret "order," the conspirator was almost as insulated from the variegated world around him as he was while serving his term as political prisoner. The sort of revolutionary "realism" that led Buonarroti to develop his secret society along hierarchical lines and that involved a separation between the troops and the general staff of his invisible army, effectively cut off the supreme command

³³ "Idée Générale d'une Société Secrète," Saitta, II, 108.

from contact with the popular sources of discontent and intensified its abstract and Utopian character.

This is illustrated in the "third credo" of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits which Dr. Lehning offers as proof of Buonarroti's consistent fidelity to the "Communist Creed of 1796." This "third credo," however, seems to be more closely related to the prerevolutionary archaic utopia of the eighteenth-century philosophers than to the revolutionary doctrines of the Babouvists. From his activities during the Revolution, from his consistent admiration for the institutions and ideas of 1793, from the codes of his later secret societies, and the content of his later propaganda, it seems clear (as Signor Saitta points out) that Buonarroti generally based his ideal Republic on the principles of the *Contrat Social*. In other words, he usually distinguished between the "state of nature," on one hand, and, on the other, the New Jerusalem that he hoped to found upon the basis of popular sovereignty.³⁴ His attack on private property derived generally from the necessity of destroying those interests that impeded the formation of the general will rather than from the regressive dream of primitive anarchy that had been expressed in the *Discourse on Inequality* and that had inspired Weishaupt.³⁵ But in the "credo" of the *Areopagus*, "innocence and equality" are significantly linked together; their joint loss as a consequence of the "imprudent division of land" is discussed in a manner that evokes the source of Weishaupt's inspiration.³⁶ As will later become evident, the pastoral idyll never entirely lost its appeal for Buonarroti and was to effect his orientation to nineteenth-century developments. In this instance, however, his ideological regression seems to have been the logical consequence of his tactical shift away from insurrection and toward the formation of a secret order.

In its emphasis on discipline, in its cosmopolitan and "metapolitical" character, Weishaupt's conception of his secret "order" owed much to his observation of the Jesuits in Bavaria.³⁷ Similarly,

³⁴ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 118.

³⁵ See Francovich, "Gli Illuminati," *Movimento Operaio*, IV, 565, 568.

³⁶ Text of Credo, Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 124.

³⁷ Francovich, "Gli Illuminati," *Movimento Operaio*, IV, 556.

Buonarroti conceived of himself as a kind of secular Loyola:

Midst the collapse of free institutions, midst the general corruption of sentiments one cannot find . . . future regeneration save in a secret corps guided by a pure and dictatorial authority; what the Jesuits did to mislead and enslave men, the Monde has attempted to do in order to enlighten and deliver them. Good and evil can be operated by the same mechanism; if the end is just and wise, what difference does it make if the means have been used in other circumstances for a contrary end!

The jesuitical congregation can be compared to an army full of enthusiasm and submissive by conviction to a homogeneous and absolute authority. It is precisely an equivalent army that the Monde has attempted to establish against tyranny.³⁸

But the Society of Jesus was only one organ of a much larger, fully developed institution that commanded the allegiance of a vast population; it exacted vows of obedience in terms of an accepted theology that was not kept secret from most of its members. Buonarroti's society was related only to a Jacobin "church" that may have been militant for a brief historic moment within the parochial confines of a single nation. (The historic existence of anything remotely resembling an "église jacobine" is of course hotly denied by many very distinguished French historians, with specific reference to the brief period 1793-94.) It was, at any rate, never again to be triumphant, save in the confines of his own imagination.

The relationship of Buonarroti's secret society to other organizations involved in what might be called the "counter-Restoration" movement was, at one time, obscure and complicated. It has been illuminated by recent research but, at the same time, rendered even more controversial and complex. There is general agreement that the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits was formed between 1809 and 1811, during the period when Buonarroti's activities and associates were arousing well founded suspicions from the Genevan prefect. After examining two conflicting opinions, which traced the origins of Buonarroti's secret society, on one hand, to the Masonic Order and, on the other, to the Italian Carboneria, Signor Saitta has

³⁸ "Devoirs des VV: :AA: :," Excerpt from notebook of the Monde, in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 111-112.

rejected them both. In his opinion, the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits evolved independently of both the Masons and the Carbonari. It was, instead, a reorganisation of the society of the Philadelphes.³⁹ Like this principal anti-Bonapartist secret society, the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits represented a merger of those neo-Jacobins with whom Buonarroti had corresponded while a prisoner at Cherbourg, and a group of anti-Bonapartist officers.⁴⁰ This theory is generally accepted and has clarified much that was previously obscure.

Controversy and complexity have come from the thesis developed by Carlo Francovich, who suggests that the striking resemblance between the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits and the Illuminati was due to an organic connection.⁴¹ The vital link, he maintains, was provided by certain special masonic lodges which had been infiltrated by the Illuminati during the eighteenth century.⁴² During the Empire, these special lodges provided the impetus for the formation of both the Carboneria and the Philadelphes. Banished from the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits by Signor Saitta, the Masons and the Carbonari have thus been readmitted—in the special guise of Illuminés—by Signor Francovich. Even as the latter has complicated the issue, he has raised anew the controversial question of whether Weishaupt's order survived after its dissolution in the eighteenth century to provide a subversive network which linked the Decembrists in Russia with the Tugendbund in Germany, the Carbonari in Italy, and the Philadelphes in France. Like almost all the evidence

³⁹ Because of conflicting evidence and a confusing terminology further compounded by varying French and Italian orthography, it is almost impossible to identify the separate roles played by one group variously called the Adelfia, the Adelphe, the Adelfi; and another, variously termed the Filadelphi or the Philadelphes. The latter organization was, at any rate, the key one in the formation of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits. See Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 120-121; Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 80-81; II, 95.

⁴⁰ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 80-81.

⁴¹ Francovich, "Gli Illuminati . . .," *Movimento Operaio*, IV, 553-597.

⁴² The extent and effects of this infiltration are hotly debated. Even those who deny its importance concede that, on a very minor scale and with no apparent results, such infiltration did occur. See for example, Daniel Mornet, *Les Origines Intellectuelles de la Révolution Française 1715-1787* (Paris, 1947), 4th ed., pp. 386-387.

relating to the Illuminist conspiracy, the documents published by Francovich seem very convincing until one notes their source. They were compiled by Giuseppe Valtancoli—an informer, paid by the Tuscan police.⁴³ For a long time, the conspiratorial thesis has been well nourished by an abundant supply of documents from similar sources, giving rise to what Le Forestier called “la légende policière.”⁴⁴

In fact, ever since Abbé Barruel opened the first cycle of “grandes épopées” relating to the Illuminati with his massive volumes,⁴⁵ the proliferation of documents on this subject has been as marked as the persistent absence of objective, detailed, biographical data on the scattered personnel involved. In this latter connection, Francovich has failed to consider the consequences of drawing evidence not only from paid informers, who had much to gain from deliberate prevarication, but also from those who may have been unconscious myth-makers. Thus he refers to Buonarroti’s possible membership in 1786 in a Florentine lodge dominated by the Illuminati, without sufficient warning that the very existence of such a lodge has been deemed “fantastic” by Le Forestier.⁴⁶ Although he draws heavily on the latter’s classic study, Francovich simply ignores its conclusion, that every extension of Weishaupt’s order beyond the geographical confines of what is today Germany and Austria and beyond the time limit set by its formal dissolution

⁴³ Francovich, “Gli Illuminati . . .” *Movimento Operaio*, IV, 572; 585–597.

⁴⁴ R. Le Forestier, *Les Illuminés de Bavière et la Franc-Maçonnerie Allemande* (Paris, 1914), p. 699.

⁴⁵ *Mémoires Pour Servir à l’Histoire du Jacobinisme* (London, 1797), 4 vols.

⁴⁶ Francovich, “Gli Illuminati . . .,” *Movimento Operaio*, IV, 575–576n, cites Robison’s *Proofs of a Conspiracy against all Religions and Governments of Europe carried on in the Secret Meetings of the Freemasons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies* (Edinburgh, 1798), I, 274 as his only authority in this connection, with a mild warning of its possible unreliability. This warning was mild enough to be overlooked by Lehning, who states flatly that such a lodge existed, citing Francovich as his only authority, “Buonarroti and His Secret Societies,” *International Review of Social History*, I, 121, n3. Le Forestier’s devastating critique of the incoherent and garbled account of the Illuminati given by Robison (who knew no German) is in *Les Illuminés*, pp. 676–680.

in 1790 belongs within the domain of fantasy and legend. Instead he turns to the very authorities Le Forestier considered as the myth-makers to fill in the critical gaps in his evidence. Nevertheless, Francovich's detailed investigation of Italian masonic literature—when added to the documentary evidence that has already accumulated—suggests that Le Forestier has pressed his thesis too far. For it seems more unreasonable to believe that French and Italian authorities collaborated secretly for several decades, doctoring masses of documents relating to masonic ritual, than it does to believe in the authenticity of these documents. Only by resorting to an unreasonable conspiratorial hypothesis then, can one reject absolutely all the evidence relating to the survival of the Illuminés.

Here again is a historiographically "loaded" question that may be bypassed. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that the conspiratorial thesis put forth by men like Robison and Abbé Barruel was *subjectively* "real" in certain circles during the early nineteenth century. It was the sort of thesis that appealed to the Romantic imagination—a faculty which both conspirators and police agents shared in this period.⁴⁷ It won acceptance not only from aristocrats, churchmen and foreigners during this era, but was also expressed in French social-democratic literature.⁴⁸ It is quite possible that Buonarroti himself made an important contribution to this literature in his aptly titled *Conspiration Pour L'Egalité*.⁴⁹ One may suspend judgement on the authenticity of a letter—furnished by Valtancoli and published by Francovich—in which Buonarroti described the Massoneria Illuminata as a "vast family" extending from "Lisbon to Petersburg, from Naples to Edinburgh."⁵⁰ From the codes of his secret societies, there is already ample evidence that Buonarroti

⁴⁷ See Léonce Pingaud, *La Jeunesse de Charles Nodier—Les Philadelphes* (Paris, 1919), *passim*.

⁴⁸ According to Le Forestier, it was expressed in George Sand's *La Comtesse de Rudolstadt*.

⁴⁹ For full title and discussion of this work, see Chapter 4. The suggestion that it was a myth-making work comes from Georges Pariset, "Babouvisme et Maçonnerie," *Mélanges Offerts à M. Charles Andler par ses Amis et ses Elèves* (Strasbourg, 1924), pp. 269–276.

⁵⁰ Copy of letter intercepted by Bolognese Police, dated July 19, 1820 in Francovich, "Gli Illuminati . . .," *Movimento Operaio*, IV, 596–597.

helped to shape the mentality which led Louis Blanc to link Weishaupt with Babeuf as a founder of the "Social International Revolution."⁵¹

It is difficult to determine whether Buonarroti's version of the "conspiracy for equality" was that of a conscientious chronicler or of an unconscious (or even of a deliberate) myth-maker. It may never be possible to determine whether or not Buonarroti first encountered Weishaupt's order when it was in actual operation, in 1786, or after its dissolution, when its "secrets" were "unveiled" in Abbé Barruel's four volumes in 1797. But one can observe, with some degree of certainty, that after the turn of the century, Buonarroti was to exploit the idea of being linked to a select and secret company, who had set in motion the Great Revolution, and who had bequeathed to surviving colleagues the task of bringing it to its ultimate conclusion. The conspiratorial thesis which crystallized about the Illuminati, was of critical importance in shaping Buonarroti's conception of his own historic mission and the methods he adopted to fulfill that mission. Thus, his adoption of Weishaupt's "gradualist" approach went hand in hand with the prevalent conviction that the eighteenth-century Illuminatist conspiracy had had political repercussions that went far beyond the ideological, geographic and chronological limits set by its founder. The *thèse de complots* pivoted about the long-range effects of the project to infiltrate the masonic order, which had been put into effect by Weishaupt, after four years of discussion and planning, in 1782. This thesis should be kept in mind in considering the *modus operandi* of Buonarroti's own organization.

For in its structure and symbolism, the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits was almost identical with the masonic order and this was a typical and quite deliberate piece of camouflage. Buonarroti had no use for most Free Masons; their organization he regarded with the scorn that a professional reserves for amateurs. "The public character of its meetings, the almost infinite number of its initiates, and the

⁵¹ See, for example, italicized portion of citation on p. 45, *infra*. On the contribution to the legend made by Louis Blanc's *Histoire de la Révolution Française*, see Le Forestier, *Les Illuminés*, Book II, Chap. 3.

ease with which they are admitted have removed from Masonry every trace of political inclination. And if an exception is made of *some very few and almost unknown lodges in which the light is preserved in its purity*, all the others are nothing more than entertainment centers or schools of superstition and slavery.”⁵²

But in the mystery of the Masonic order, the quasi-republican form of its deliberations, the very obscurity of its language, he saw opportunities for exploitation by those who needed a “cover” for “broader ideas” and for plans that were “no less favorable to humanity than they were feared by those who oppress it.” Thus, even as it had been with the Illuminati after 1782, the infiltration of the masonic order became one of the objects of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits. Every candidate for the supreme command had to go through the masonic hierarchy and acquire a key position in a lodge in the country where he was a resident.⁵³ It is conceivable that recent Buonarrotian research on use of the Free Masons as a “front” may resolve some of the ambiguity surrounding the activities of that order during the early nineteenth century. At any rate, it seems evident that deliberate duplicity and bad faith characterized the relationship of Buonarroti’s organization to that of the Masons.

A similar exploitative approach was employed in his relations with the Italian and French branches of the Carbonari which, unlike the eighteenth-century Masonic order, was organized in Italy about the same time as the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits and somewhat later in France; but which, like the Masons, failed to meet Buonarroti’s strict criteria of secrecy, limited admission policy, precise and pre-determined goal.⁵⁴ Around 1818, he played a major role in altering the structure of the Carboneria of Tuscany, Piedmont, and Lombardy under the ostensible purpose of its reform, adding a third grade so as to dovetail its hierarchy with that of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits and thereby facilitate infiltration.⁵⁵ The French

⁵² “La Mac : :, La Charb : : et le M : :,” Excerpt from the notebook of the Monde, in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, Appendix C, p. 95. Italics mine.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Saitta, II, Appendix C, p. 95.

⁵⁵ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 97.

Charbonnerie, led by moderate liberals like Lafayette and de Corcelle, was considered to be "disfigured" and a decree of August 4, 1822 forbade all members of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits to communicate freely with it; diplomatic relations through official delegates were maintained, however, and the organisation was deemed useful enough to encourage the formation of new "ventes" under Buonarroti's secret auspices.⁵⁶

Buonarroti's secret society was, then, entirely autonomous. It represented a conspiracy not only against the prevailing regimes but also against competing opposition groups. Its supreme command (the mysterious and supposedly omnipotent *Grand Firmament*) regarded these latter groups only in terms of possible exploitation for its own ends. According to the unreliable testimony of Witt-Döring:

The distinctive trait of the Grand Firmament was a continuous tendency to render itself master of other societies, even of those whose direct end is altogether contrary to its end; but it is not enough for it to realize its purpose, it must achieve this by manipulating appearances, by without seeming to do so, using all foreign corporations in the execution of its plans.⁵⁷

On paper, at least, this was the kind of secret society that fulfilled every expectation of the most paranoid imagination. The spectre that haunted Metternich, that caused Stendhal's Prince of Parma to peer nightly under his bed for hidden Jacobins, and that republican historians regard as an unreal bogey—of a cosmopolitan, super-secret network, masterminded by a dedicated professional, the work of whose agents could be discerned in radical movements in the major European capitals, did have a certain reality—in the notebook of the Monde if not in the world outside.

Georges Weill, in a footnote reference, takes the typical republican line on this issue: "As for the international republican association

⁵⁶ "La Mac : , La Charb : : et le M : :," in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, Appendix C, p. 95.

⁵⁷ G. Witt-Döring, *Les Sociétés Secrètes de France et d'Italie* (Paris, 1830), p. 9, cited by Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 96. This Danish adventurer who is also one of Francovich's favorite witnesses, set the second cycle of Illuminist "epics" in motion by his spectacular revelations.

of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits, whose envoy, Andryane, was arrested in Italy in January 1823, its role, despite the efforts of Buonarroti, appears to have been insignificant."⁵⁸ As one might expect this view has been echoed by American historians who have tended (in the past, at least) to regard hints of an effective and sinister radical conspiracy with humorous incredulity. Thus M. Weill's semantically whitewashed version of Buonarroti's secret "order" becomes even more innocuous in Mr. Artz's references to "an international *liberal* organisation" which was "dreamed of" by Buonarroti and taken much too seriously by Metternich.⁵⁹ Signor Saitta has suggested, however, that previous authorities had underestimated the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits partly because they may have misplaced its supreme cell. Unlike the masonic Grand Orient and the Supreme Vente of the Charbonnerie, the Grand Firmament was probably not located in Paris, where earlier authorities had unhesitatingly placed it, but in Geneva, where its creator could keep it free of various taints (like the Bonapartist and Anglophile heresies that disfigured the Charbonnerie) while maintaining contacts with renascent French radical organizations and developments in Italy, Germany, Switzerland, and Belgium.⁶⁰ Jacques Godechot and Georges Lefebvre, who surely cannot be classed as frightened conservatives, have been persuaded by Signor Saitta's work that Buonarroti was "uncontestably the animator of most of the societies of masonic or carbonarist inspiration from 1812 to 1830."⁶¹ Arthur Lehning, after an independent investigation of the testimony of one of Buonarroti's agents, cites with approval Signor Saitta's

⁵⁸ Georges Weill, *Histoire du Parti Républicain*, p. 12n.

⁵⁹ F. Artz, *Reaction and Revolution 1814-1832*, The Rise of Modern Europe, ed. by W. Langer (New York, 1934), pp. 142, 150. Italics mine. The author bases his remarks on Weill's article "Philippe Buonarroti," *Revue Historique*, LXXVI, 241-275.

⁶⁰ This hypothesis, however, does give rise to certain other difficulties as shown by Lehning, "Buonarroti and His Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 126-127. Although Lehning agrees with Saitta's arguments against the location of Buonarroti's headquarters in Paris, he correctly observes that more evidence is required, before this question can be settled.

⁶¹ Godechot and Lefebvre, Review Article, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, XXIII, 91.

verdict: in the vast underground world of early nineteenth-century secret societies, "Buonarroti was a true divinity, if not omnipotent—at least omnipresent."⁶²

Recent research, then, has shown that the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits existed outside Buonarroti's dreams and Metternich's nightmares. Although "a full documentation of its activities is missing," patient digging has uncovered connections with virtually every continental secret society of the Restoration era. How effective were these connections? Did the infiltration that occurred actually result in effective control of the "counter-Restoration" movement? Signor Saitta is content to establish the fact of Buonarroti's omnipresence. He regards the "difficult and thorny problem" of the "efficiency" and "positive results achieved" by the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits as outside his sphere of competence as an historian.⁶³ Narrowly defined, the problem does appear to be insoluble. In dealing with a conspiracy which chooses to mask itself, one can never be sure whether one is exaggerating grossly or underestimating seriously the extent of its influence. From a broad historical perspective, however, the problem can be fairly easily dismissed. For it is a matter of historical record that in 1823 the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits was rendered impotent. However "efficient" Buonarroti may have been, he led whatever organizations he controlled into a *cul-de-sac*. The positive results he may have achieved, were effectively cancelled out by Andryane's capture.⁶⁴ Recent research has shown that Buonarroti's organization was not invented by Metternich. But no one has yet shown that the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits served any significant historic purpose other than to strengthen the latter's hand by being discovered.

As a later discussion will show, Buonarroti occasionally believed

⁶² Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 79; Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 117.

⁶³ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 79n2.

⁶⁴ On this episode, see pp. 53-54, *infra*. As Lehning notes, in 1823 following the defeat of insurrections in Naples, Piedmont, and in Spain, "the activities of the revolutionary secret societies and of their efforts to change the political regime of the Holy Alliance" also came to a dead end. "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 128.

that his task could be eased by the temporary triumph of those who sought to restore the Ancien Régime. He did not regard the Holy Alliance as his most dangerous enemy. On the eve of the Revolution of 1830, he actually prayed for the triumph of reaction.⁶⁵ From this point of view, the end of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits, as well as its establishment, may have contributed to that erosion of the social fabric which was its ostensible goal. Here one has reached the point where even historians become infected by the paranoid atmosphere of the secret society—where the role of the arch-conspirator and that of the *agent provocateur* become interchangeable. This is by now a most familiar situation and probably novelists like Dostoevsky, Conrad, or Henry James are better able to cope with it than historians. The point is that any investigation of the fantastic world reflected in novels like *The Possessed*, *The Secret Agent*, or *The Princess Casamassima* must begin with Buonarroti's nonfictional career.

Whatever its impact at the time, the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits was an institution which set a pattern for the future, especially in the strict autonomy which characterized its relations with similar societies outside its auspices, in the techniques of infiltration and creation of "fronts," and in its cosmopolitan composition. It also set a pattern, in that it was a personal organization. Like the secret societies formed later by Blanqui and Bakunin, it might be described as the private army of the professional revolutionist who created it, who wielded it, and whose life span set a term to its existence. As a product of a romantic individualism, it set a vogue that would pass with the Romantic generation itself, but traces of Buonarroti's fine Italian hand would remain in the tactics adopted by the more impersonal conspiratorial organizations that followed.⁶⁶

In his personal existence, Buonarroti also set a pattern that belonged to the age of Hernani and that others would imitate

⁶⁵ See pp. 133-134, *infra*.

⁶⁶ For a different interpretation see Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 116, 135. Although he might not agree with the above, Lehning does note that Buonarroti's organization collapsed at his death (p. 139).

until the romantic vogue became decadent and the professional revolutionist, like the poet, would prefer to mask his true vocation in a business suit. The first impression he made during his Genevan period (in 1820) on a young newcomer to Switzerland reveals a figure that was to become increasingly stereotyped in the course of the century. The odd somber attire, the piercing glance, the air of mystery were eventually so carefully cultivated that, by the end of the century, one account of some "unforgettable" meeting with a veteran conspirator had become indistinguishable from another:

A broad-brimmed hat covers his white hair; his forehead is wide and arched; his eyes, under bushy eyebrows, are lively and shine frequently behind... his eyeglasses... In summer as in winter he wears the same suit, the same "gilet à la Robespierre" the same black trousers which don't quite reach his short top-boots—a strange enough attire in itself and one which alone would suffice to make him stand out if something proud and unique did not also force you to stare at this sexagenarian whose path crosses yours constantly in the narrow streets of Geneva, passing near you, holding sheets of music under his arm, with a grave, preoccupied, and mysterious air.⁶⁷

The newcomer was Alexandre Andryane who became a student of Buonarroti's first in Italian, then in music, and finally in conspiracy. His growing intimacy, however, never lessened the awe that his teacher had first inspired in him:

The proud and vigorous speech of this descendant of Michelangelo, his brief but weighty sentences, his strange revelations, sometimes clear and precise as if he were participating in actual events, sometimes mysterious like the oracles of the sybils made such an impression on me that I frequently thought of him as an occult power whose shadowy tentacles extended over and stirred part of Europe...

Nothing was unknown to him: science, history, literature all entered into his conversations when one was able to tear him away from his obsession, the Republic of '93.⁶⁸

The relationship between the old conspirator and the young student is perhaps the most fully documented example of how the

⁶⁷ A. Andryane, *Souvenirs de Genève* (Brussels, 1839), I, 120.

⁶⁸ Andryane, I, 134, 147.

enthusiasm of the few surviving "true believers" of '93 converted the youth of the new generation. It is surely one of the first fully documented examples of the recruitment not of a member of Buonarroti's new profession but of a "fellow traveller." The instance is particularly striking because Andryane regarded himself as relatively immune to the attraction exerted by the Jacobin mystique. His impression of Forestier de Moulins (an octogenarian ex-conventionnel whom he met before becoming acquainted with Buonarroti) was coloured by his repugnance for the "buveurs de sang" of '93 as a letter to his parents revealed.⁶⁹ But Buonarroti fascinated him, perhaps at first as a curiosity: "Strange character! wherein one finds united all the virtues of a Greek sage with all the exaggerations of a Jacobin of '93."⁷⁰ Like so many of his contemporaries, he was amazed at the persistence and energy exhibited by so old a man in pursuit of what seemed so obviously a lost cause, in working "for thirty years without ever stopping, like a spider in his hole, spinning the threads of a conspiracy that all the governments have broken, each in turn, and that he never tires of renewing."⁷¹

While he admired Buonarroti's ardor, he was careful to note (in October 1820) "I am far from sharing his ultra-republican ideas."⁷² Yet somehow (here again he resembled many of his contemporaries) his skepticism was inadequate, serving only to make possible his ironic observation of his own behavior. The older man's will prevailed and, almost in spite of himself, he began to look forward to initiation into Buonarroti's secret society.

Although I am far from sharing Buonarroti's exaggerated opinions, I respect him too much, however, not to be flattered by the proposition he has just made me; and I admit I am impatient, waiting for the day when I will become part of the association of which he has spoken to me with so much enthusiasm.⁷³

That was in August 1821. The period that he called his "novitiate" ended two months later. On October 10, 1821, he was initiated

⁶⁹ Letter, May 30, 1820, Andryane, I, 103-105.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 197-198.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, II, 115.

⁷² Andryane, I, 149.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, I, 257.

into the Society. According to his own account, at least, he responded to the catechism put to him during the initiation in a spirited, unorthodox manner—refusing to renounce the “faith of his fathers” when questioned concerning revealed religion, holding this to be a matter of one’s private conscience, to be decided by each individual in his own way. To a persistent interrogator who asked if he supported the Church which had “helped kings to rivet the people to their chains,” he boldly replied with a rhetorical question of his own: “Are we here concerned with a religious profession of faith or rather with an association of honest men and worthy patriots directed against the abuses of power?” The assembly decided that this was neither the time nor place for such a controversy and Andryane was initiated without further ado.⁷⁴

From then on, much to his surprise, he found himself behaving as a useful disciple, undertaking numerous missions for his master. Before one such voyage (to an assembly at Lyons), Andryane wryly reflected on “the irresistible influence that he [Buonarroti] exerts on all who approach him and of whom I am myself at this moment such a striking example . . . since nothing was further from my desire and my will than to attend this assembly.”⁷⁵ An example of the methods of persuasion employed was given in the following exchange. Andryane, who loathed the constant intrigue involved in his secret journeys, was trying to get out of a new mission—wishing to remain with his books and studies (for which purpose he had after all originally come to Geneva). Buonarroti disgustedly exclaimed:

“here we have the youth of the day . . . it thinks it has done everything when it has run through a few volumes . . . it was not by reading folios that the patriots of ’93 won a republic!”

“The republic! [Andryane cried] . . . who could today plan to reestablish it in France? Who could, in good faith, work at that with any hope of success?”

“I,” responded Buonarroti.⁷⁶

The student’s final mission was to Italy where he had been sent with a mass of documents which included the Rules and Statutes

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 1–7.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 174.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 250.

of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits and the names of countless conspirators—"a mass of papers, one more useless and dangerous than another, sufficient to compromise half of Italy" according to a fellow conspirator.⁷⁷ Andryane, as one might expect, hesitated about accepting the documents

given me by Buonarroti despite myself, and that I must study, he told me during the time I still had left in Switzerland. Strange mania, all these rules, statutes, ciphers, certificates to which he attaches as much importance as one used to give to titles of nobility or of knighthood, as if it were necessary to make use of all these vain formalities in order to reach an understanding and to act accordingly! . . . But he thinks that in order to form an efficient and permanent political association, men need to be tied to each other by signs, by mysteries that flatter their sense of self-importance, and make the society to which they belong seem important and consistent in a way that all of morality and the reciprocal esteem of individuals could not obtain; he bases this on his own experience, and perhaps he is right . . . for at all times and in all countries, there have been baubles for those great children that we honor with the name of men!⁷⁸

His reluctance was well founded for he was arrested in Milan in 1823 and the papers fell into the hands of the police. The result was the unraveling of the conspiracy and the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits entered the public domain, providing future historians with much material for conjecture.

Buonarroti's incredible foolhardiness in sending a nervous, inexperienced agent on a dangerous mission armed with unnecessary incriminating documents has never been explained.⁷⁹ Like the apparently inexplicable action of the criminal, who commits an undetectable crime and then plants unnecessary clues leading to his arrest, Buonarroti's action (especially if his customary obsession with secrecy is noted) will remain "incomprehensible" unless one

⁷⁷ Andryane, *Mémoires d'un Prisonnier d'Etat* (Paris, 1850), 3rd. ed., I, 24.

⁷⁸ Andryane, cited in Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 129.

⁷⁹ Lehning mildly refers to it as "somewhat incomprehensible," *International Review*, I, 129.

has recourse to psychology—to unconscious motivation—and here the historian is out of his depth.

To suggest that Buonarroti desired publicity more than he feared disaster; that after working tirelessly to construct his secret network, he could not resist revealing his masterpiece to the world; is to speculate about matters that can never be supported by facts and thus to enter dangerous waters. One is on safer ground in noting that many of Buonarroti's accomplices suffered much more from his "incomprehensible" action than he did. Andryane in particular paid a harsh price, as a wide audience would learn from his *Mémoires d'un Prisonnier d'Etat au Spielberg*. Buonarroti himself merely departed from Geneva and after a year in hiding in the canton of Vaud took up residence, under an assumed name, in Brussels.⁸⁰ Only under the relatively unified organisation, represented by the Napoleonic Empire, it seemed, was it possible to keep him under surveillance and even then he was not closely watched. After the Congress of Vienna, he was never to be imprisoned or even brought to trial.⁸¹ He remained at large until he died a natural death, partly because, as he moved from country to country, he could profit from the comparative anarchy of the European state-system. Aside from the fact that foreign statesmen were often working at cross purposes, aside from the difficulties involved in extradition; his adoption of aliases, his patrician background and influential friends also help to account for his remaining free to spin his conspiratorial web. And when he was, from time to time, harassed by the local police he was both skillful and experienced in eluding them. But no one can doubt that he could have been caught, if a sustained, concerted effort had been made to catch him. The pursuit was, to the contrary, sporadic and half hearted; the quarry seemed more in earnest than the hunters. Perhaps the authorities, unlike his recent biographers, did not take him quite as seriously as he took himself.

⁸⁰ M Pianzola, "Buonarroti in Svizzera," *Movimento Operaio*, VII, 131, has traced Buonarroti's movements in detail.

⁸¹ In October, 1833, Buonarroti was arrested in Paris. He was released after a few hours of interrogation by the police.

The Launching of a Book (1824—1830)

What is the meaning of all these lucubrations against egoism and individualism?—What is egoism?—What is brotherhood?—What is individualism? And what is love of humanity?

Alexander Herzen, 1850

I am perplexed by my own data and my conclusion is a direct contradiction of the original idea with which I start. Starting from unlimited freedom, I arrive at unlimited despotism. I will add, however, that there can be no solution of the social problem but mine.

Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*

During the following six years in Brussels, Buonarroti continued to ply his conspiratorial trade, mending the web that Andryane's capture had broken—his reorganized cosmopolitan secret society was to be called the "Monde"—and winning important recruits from among his new acquaintances in Belgium, notably Felix Delhasse, Louis de Potter, and the Frenchman Charles Teste.¹ Both his public and private life were to be somewhat altered, however, by a change of companions which resulted from his change of scene. Much to the distress of Teresa Poggi, when he left Switzerland for Belgium, Buonarroti took with him a Swiss woman named Sarah Desbains.

¹ On Teste, see pp. 105–109, *infra*. On Delhasse, de Potter, and many other important recruits, see Galante Garrone, *Filippo Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari dell'Ottocento, 1828–1837* (Turin, 1951), pp. 75–83, who is more cautious in his treatment of Buonarroti's probable influence on various future notables than Saitta (see his handling of Claudio Linati, pp. 80–81 n, for instance) and therefore a more reliable guide.

Teresa's jealousy and fury made impossible the ménage-à-trois that he had apparently envisioned. A sentimental drama ensued; it had a different plot but was in the same genre as that made memorable by E. H. Carr in his portrait of Herzen's household.² It was played out solely in a correspondence, which, since the leading players were over sixty, had its comical aspects. Buonarroti obstinately refused to accept Teresa's verdict despite her passionate and vituperative letters explaining why she did not wish to share him with the Swiss "vipère." The affair was well summed up in a letter he received from his friend Gambini, who had agreed to act as a go-between but whose patience was at an end: "You would like, my dear man, to change the nature of things, and expect a lady raised in the customs of old Europe to begin to live like a Moslem in her sixtieth year; this is like wanting, as I have said to you, to take the moon by the teeth." The episode seems worth recounting because it so clearly reveals Buonarroti's characteristic refusal to accept "the facts of life" even when presented by sympathetic friends. Although he failed, here as elsewhere, to obtain his impossible objective, it was not through want of trying. Sarah Desbains at any rate was to remain by his side until her death in Paris in 1835, and he was to continue his lively correspondence with Teresa until his own death two years later.³

On the more public plane of his life, his shift in locale led to a renewed contact with the exiled remnants of the government of '93 whose oral conversations, personal memoirs and apologies, were to provide the foundation for the great historiographic debate on the Revolution. During the Bourbon Restoration, Brussels had become the headquarters for the surviving administrators and legislators of the First Republic who had been classified as "regicides" and had rallied to Napoleon during the Hundred Days and thus were excluded from the Amnesty of 1816.⁴ Cambon, David, Levasseur, Barère, Sieyès, Prieur de la Marne, Vadier, Cavaignac, Thibaudeau,

² E. H. Carr, *The Romantic Exiles*, *passim*.

³ For details and correspondence, see Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 37-40.

⁴ E. Welvert, *Lendemain Révolutionnaires: Les Régicides* (Paris, 1907), pp. i-lx, discusses these confusing categories in detail.

Baudot, Chazal, Cambacérès, Oudot, Merlin (de Douai), and many lesser luminaries of '93 lived out their last years together in Brussels, meeting at the *Café des Mille Colonnes*, on park benches, and at each others' homes. Tied to each other by the bond of a shared past and common exile, but still nourishing old ideological, factional, and personal differences, these elderly men found an outlet for the formidable energies that had earlier made them famous, by reshaping the image of the First Republic. They used the time that lay so heavily on their hands by writing memoirs—to pay off old scores, to vindicate their personal roles and at the same time the institutions they had helped to create. Buonarroti was neither a regicide nor an ex-conventionnel, but his position as a former Jacobin bureaucrat, as a political enemy of the Restoration regimes, and especially as an experienced exile won him acceptance into the circles frequented by these veterans. Here as elsewhere, his personal charm and patrician background also helped to open doors that might otherwise have been closed to him, for as a consistent and intransigent Robespierrist (as well as in his secret connections with contemporary radical movements) he remained something of an oddity.

Many of his companions probably shared Baudot's reaction to Buonarroti's presence:

I feel a bit awkward with him because I disapprove of his system with every point of view. If I spoke to him of it, he would be displeased by my invincible repugnance. If I say nothing concerning it, I am afraid I will mortify him. In every way I esteem him as an honest, very virtuous fellow, but I want no part of *Collective Happiness*.⁵

Buonarroti, himself, felt a bit awkward about the implications of his friendship with Vadier's family.

Here I am tied to Vadier and by a counter-blow, in contact with his friend Barère. Is it because I esteem them; is it because I see in them two firm supporters of Liberty, two wise founders of the Republic? I am

⁵ Letter of M.-A. Baudot to H. Tussau, August 17, 1829, in Galante Garrone, "Filippo Buonarroti e i Convenzionali in Esilio," *Movimento Operaio* (1953), V, 48. The difficult to translate, italicized phrase: "*Bonheur Commun*" occurs in Article 23 of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* in the Constitution of 1793. Thompson translates it as "the happiness of all." See J. M. Thompson, *The French Revolution* (New York, 1945), p. 394.

obliged to avow that in my eyes they do not merit this honor, neither one nor the other.⁶

Both men, Buonarroti noted, had made the right enemies, the Royalists, the Girondins, and eventually the Thermidoreans. Vadier moreover had shared "three and a half years of my captivity and deportation as one of those accused at Vendôme." But he would never be able to forget that both had been "absolutely the authors or accomplices of that very plot which victimized Robespierre and the people."

These two men who in all their conversations, congratulate themselves on their patriotism and make a great show of their incorruptibility had, one and the other, a very important role in the events which halted the progress of the Revolution and dug the grave of liberty. What leads me to judge them in this way are public events, their own avowals, and the knowledge I have of their principles and their character.⁷

In Baudot's brief note on his uneasy friendship with a fellow exile are the germs of Edgar Quinet's two volume attempt to disengage the First Republic from the sectarian Robespierrist experiment.⁸ A line may be drawn from Baudot's friendship with Danton through Quinet to Aulard's eulogy of the favorite Jacobin of the "homme moyen sensuel." The friction produced by Buonarroti's renewed contact with the "frivolous" and "Voltairean" Vadier generated a controversy that would absorb scholarly energies for a century or more. In his commentary on a passage from Vadier's memoirs, Buonarroti produced—in a remarkably developed form, which included a condemnation of the Girondins as leaders of the "bourgeois aristocracy"—that apologia for the Republic of Virtue which, in a somewhat more sophisticated and academically respectable guise, still colors French revolutionary historiography.

The trademark of this version was the distinction drawn between

⁶ Buonarroti's notes on Vadier's memoirs, cited in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, Appendix F, 255–256.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 257.

⁸ Baudot was in fact a daily visitor to the Quinet household during Edgar's childhood; see E. Quinet, *Histoire de Mes Idées* (Paris, n.d.), p. 68. Baudot's *Notes Historiques* were later published by Quinet's widow, see Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 267.

the one true Revolution, which installed the First Republic and the Constitution of 1793, and the various "false" revolutions of 1787, 1789, or 1795; between the virtuous and incorruptible leaders of this Revolution and their immoral and corrupt enemies. The latter in turn tended to be divided into two groups. On one hand was a list of suspects that started with the English and other foreigners, went on with the nobility and the clergy, and probably ended with the "bourgeois aristocracy." This group included all the "natural" enemies of the Republic, who were, in any case, almost defeated by the summer of 1794. On the other hand were the "false Republicans," the immoral, corrupt, and indulgent egoists, the "unnatural" men who had fought the enemies of the First Republic but, after its establishment, had, for one reason or another, objected to Robespierre's leadership.

For the Revolution had liberated from aristocratic and clerical oppression, not only "wise men animated by love of humanity and of their native land" but also "vile men who covered up their base passions with a veneer of philosophy," "atheists, men who were dissipated, greedy for money and power." "The most powerful enemy that remained to be combatted was immorality, and the . . . only means of solidly establishing the true Republic was the purity and virtue of the National Convention." The only principle at stake in 1793-94 was the purification of the Convention. Humanitarian considerations and appeals to the principle of parliamentary immunity were simply pretexts adopted by desperate scoundrels who were anxious to save their own skins. Despite the liquidation of dissident factions to the Left and to the Right, the purges were incomplete; the center had become rotten with corruption as well and the "falsifiers of decrees, the blackmailers, the protectors of émigrés" stabbed the Republic in the back. Although his accusations are varied and even inconsistent, Buonarroti's indictment of Robespierre's opponents, reiterated with a frequency that becomes monotonous, boils down to the fact that they were guilty, not necessarily of all the crimes charged against them, but of the most heinous crime—that of soiling the "purity and virtue of the true Republic"

by serving their own selfish interests.⁹ One can imagine the tenor of his conversations at this time and can well understand Andryane's reference to the difficulty of tearing him away "from his obsession."

But Buonarroti's "obsession" is of more than biographical interest. It illuminates a century and a half of French historical writing on the Revolution. It helps to explain why a scholarly book should appear in 1946 bearing the title *Fabre d'Eglantine, Chef des Fripons* and why the leading historical journal on the Revolution should, in 1955, devote nineteen pages to a demonstration that Danton married for money.¹⁰ When one contrasts it with the British attitude toward *their* eighteenth-century parliamentary leaders; the heated controversy, sustained by generations of French historians, over whether or not an eighteenth-century politician and his followers were involved in "intrigue, venality, and corruption," seems remarkable. Only by referring back to his explicit acceptance of Buonarroti's thesis, can one appreciate why Albert Mathiez expended so much of his scholarly energy on detailed investigations into the financial chicanery of those conventionnels whose names had appeared, many decades before, on Buonarroti's black list.¹¹

The insistence, not merely on Danton's venality, but on the *importance* of his venality has been too often overlooked as a critical element in Mathiez's celebrated quarrel with Aulard. This insistence may be partly viewed as a reflection of Mathiez's radical opposition to parliamentary corruption during the regime of the "République

⁹ For above citations and discussion see Buonarroti's notes on Vadier's memoirs in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 255-267.

¹⁰ See Louis Jacob, *Fabre d'Eglantine, Chef des Fripons* (Paris, 1946). G. Pioro, "Sur la Fortune de Danton . . ." *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (1955), XXVII, 324-343.

¹¹ See documentation on conventionnels given by Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 277-280. The importance Mathiez attached to Buonarroti's remarks is revealed in his two articles: "La Politique de Robespierre et le 9 Thermidor Expliqués par Buonarroti," and "Le Role de Barère et de Vadier au 9 Thermidor jugé par Buonarroti," *Annales Révolutionnaires* (1910), III, 481-513; (1911), IV, 96-102. For other references see Franco Venturi, *Jean Jaurès e Altri Storicisti della Rivoluzione Francese* (Turin, 1948), p. 141.

des Camarades.”¹² But one must keep in mind also the persistence of an earlier ethos—of a *mystique* of Virtue which regards the improper expenditure of money as more heinous than the improper expenditure of blood. It is a residue of this ethos that leads so many historians, who do not regard the triumph of the Incorruptible over the Indulgents as the crowning glory of the decade of Revolution and who do not think of the Panama Affair when they discuss the liquidation of the Compagnie des Indes, to treat the Thermidorean Reaction only as an inglorious rout of the “crusaders” by the “spoilsmen.” This generalized antipathy toward the Assembly which had replaced the ideal of “justice pour les patriotes, mais pour les aristocrates la terreur” by the ideal of “justice pour tout le monde”; which had also recovered initiative for the Convention while pursuing a successful foreign policy, represents a remarkable vindication of Buonarroti’s thesis. This is not the place to undertake historical revision, however, nor for an extended excursion into historiography. The foregoing remarks have been offered merely to suggest some of the implications of Buonarroti’s version of the rise and fall of the First Republic.

Of course there was nothing original about Buonarroti’s version. To the contrary it had been originally “authorized” in the rhetoric of Robespierre and Saint-Just in 1793–94; it appears clearly in Buonarroti’s own speech to the People of Oneglia who were celebrating the Feast of the Supreme Being in June 1794;¹³ it formed indeed the stock in trade of most speakers on such occasions at that time. This is a fact that has been too often overlooked. Thus Signor Galante Garrone and Signor Saitta make much of a brief work entitled *Aperçus sur la Révolution Française, depuis la mort de Capet*, which the Vendôme court published along with other documents seized at Babeuf’s residence and which was written in 1796.¹⁴

¹² Paul Farmer, *France Reviews Its Revolutionary Origins, Social Politics and Historical Opinion in the Third Republic* (New York, 1944), *passim*.

¹³ See text of *Discours Prononcé par Philippe Buonarroti Au Peuple d’Oneglia, le 20 Prairial, l’an second de la République Française . . .* (June 10, 1794) in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 253–256.

¹⁴ See Saitta, I, 267–270 and Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 25n.

In their learned argument over the real author of this work, both authorities tend to ignore the fact that its heroes and villains originated not with Babeuf, Buonarroti, Charles Germain, or their associates but were simply derived from the earlier rhetoric of the martyrs of 9 Thermidor. But if it was not original, Buonarroti's version was certainly uncommon in an era when many Frenchmen agreed with Benjamin Constant that they could no longer hear words like Justice, Public Safety, Humanity "without nausea." The orthodox Robespierriest apology for the Terror may have been an old even a sickening story to seasoned survivors but when it was retold in the late 1820s, it seemed startling and refreshingly new to many young men.

Although a few memoirs, among the many published after 1815, had hinted at a revision of the verdict of Thermidor and although the histories of Thiers and Mignet had already linked the popular cause of national integrity to the accession of the Montagnard faction, the Robespierriest apology for the Terror only became fully explicit in three works published on the eve of the July Revolution, between 1828 and 1830.¹⁵ Like the more famous histories of Lamartine, Michelet, and Esquiros that were to appear on the eve of the subsequent Revolution of 1848, these three works evoked a picture of the past that was to linger in the minds of those who were disappointed by the revolutionary aftermath. One was by Buonarroti, himself; one by a young disciple in collaboration with an ex-conventionnel exile in Brussels; and one was by Paul Mathieu Laurent, a Saint Simonist who was later, as a member of the Chamber of 1849, known as Laurent de l'Ardèche.

This latter work—the *Réfutation de l'Histoire de France de l'Abbé de Montgaillard* published in 1828 under the pseudonymous authorship of "Uranelt de Leuze"—is worth noting here, not because there is a letter from Buonarroti that indicates his interest in Laurent's work¹⁶ but, to the contrary, because it was written by a

¹⁵ The earlier material has been discussed in detail in my unpublished doctoral dissertation, *The Evolution of the Jacobin Tradition in France* (Radcliffe, 1952), pp. 167–181, 322–323.

¹⁶ Letter of Buonarroti to Charles Teste, August 6, 1829, in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, Appendix B, 45.

representative of a new generation in France who was personally unacquainted with Buonarroti and who had arrived at a similar, although not an identical version of the revolutionary drama by a different route—under the impact of Saint-Simonism.¹⁷ Thus Laurent's work serves as a useful reminder of a *caveat-lecteur* given, in a somewhat different context, by Signor Galante Garrone:

It is necessary to guard oneself against the temptation of recognizing on all sides traces of buonarrotism where, in all likelihood, one is dealing only with a coincidence of the ideas and passions of the old jacobin with the fermentation... of the old tradition not yet spent and the new popular sentiment; as in the case of the reaffirmation of the great memories of the Revolution or as in that of the reevaluation of Robespierre and robespierrism.¹⁸

Although the rehabilitation of Robespierre in the widely circulated, multi-volumed *Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution Française* (1834–38) by Buchez and Roux can be traced in part to Buonarroti's conversations with its authors and although the denunciation of Robespierre's enemies as corrupt and vicious (which is documented in Hauréau's *La Montagne* (1834) and similarly documented in Mathiez's study of corruption during the Terror) may be also traced, in part, to Buonarroti's writings and conversations;¹⁹ other vested interests also contributed to the historiographical revision. The rehabilitation of Robespierre in the immensely popular histories of Lamartine and Esquiros, which was to culminate in Hamel's hagiography, could be traced to a source that was not only entirely separate from Buonarroti but that he himself tried to and failed to tap when working on his own eulogy of the Incorruptible.²⁰ This source was Elisabeth Duplay-Lebas who, with her son Philippe, provides only

¹⁷ Waterloo rather than 9 Thermidor marked the end of the Revolution for the Saint-Simonists. See Galante Garrone, "I Sansimoniani e la Storia della Rivoluzione Francese," *Rivista Storica Italiana* (1949), LXI, 368–369. With the return of the Tricolor in 1830, the difference between the two versions would become more apparent. They looked alike, however, in the shadow of the White Flag.

¹⁸ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 207.

¹⁹ See Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 259, n17; 260; 277–280.

²⁰ Saitta, I, 72.

one example of the familial vested interest that worked, quite independently of Buonarroti and his circle, on influential portions of French society to win acceptance for the "authorized" version of the history of the First Republic.²¹ The revision of the verdict of Thermidor clearly belongs in the vast historic context of a complex interaction between two generations, that was set off by the advent of the second Restoration; it cannot be confined within the limited scope of this essay.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that the publisher of Laurent's work, Charles Antoine Teste, was to become Buonarroti's chief lieutenant.²² Teste's role in the appearance of the second work of the three under discussion was both more active and less obvious. The *Mémoires de René Levasseur (de la Sarthe) Ex-Conventionnel*, which provoked a political trial and provided the young Karl Marx with his original orientation to the French Revolution, represents the expansion by its young editor, Achille Roche, of a short manuscript of notes on the Revolution by an octogenarian ex-conventionnel into a solid four volume defense of the regime of '93.²³ Roche (1803-1834) who was sentenced to a term in Sainte Pélagie for this editorial work, was a protégé of Teste's, who probably got him the job of "editing" the *Mémoires*.²⁴ According to Signor Galante Garrone,

²¹ For a description of how the daughter of Robespierre's landlord and widow of his colleague won over the new generation to her "domestic tradition," see C. A. Sainte Beuve, Review article, Jan. 26, 1852, *Causeries de Lundi* (Paris, n.d.), V, 351n. See also p. 18, n34, *supra*.

²² Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 33-34 discusses the Teste-Laurent correspondence concerning publication. Teste's publishing house: Librairie Delaforest, Place de la Bourse, Rue des Filles-Saint-Thomas, n. 7 was popularly known as "la Petite Jacobinière." See Weill, *Parti Républicain*, p. 34.

²³ For transcript of trial which took place Feb. 12-Apr. 3, 1830, see *Mémoires de René Levasseur (de la Sarthe) Ex-Conventionnel*, ed. with introduction by Achille Roche (Paris, 1829-31), IV, 291-377. Marx's acquaintance with the work is discussed by Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 38-39n. In my dissertation, *The Jacobin Tradition*, Levasseur's work is discussed in detail, pp. 181-197.

²⁴ Teste's role in obtaining Roche to edit Levasseur's memoirs as well as publishing Laurent's *Réfutation*, is noted by Jules Prudhommeaux, *Icarie et son Fondateur, Etienne Cabet* (Paris, 1907), pp. 26-27.

it seems likely that Roche borrowed the main outline of his interpretation, which is most clearly put forth in the introduction, from Buonarroti's masterwork which had been published a year before.²⁵ Certainly Roche's version of the events which had preceded his birth was almost identical with Buonarroti's—even as it closely resembled the propaganda of the twentieth-century *Société Robespierre* which boasted of its descent from a republican society of 1832 to which Roche was to belong and which Buonarroti was to control.²⁶

Roche's doctored version of Levasseur's memoirs provoked a trial. Laurent's *Réfutation* represented a historiographical landmark. Neither of these works, however, was destined to become "the textbook and almost the breviary of a new generation of Parisian revolutionaries."²⁷ This fate was reserved for the book Buonarroti wrote during his stay in Brussels: *Conspiration Pour l'Egalité dite de Babeuf, suivie du Procès auquel elle donna Lieu et des pièces justificatives, etc.* The first edition of this two-volume chronicle, interwoven with documents and personal commentary, appeared in Brussels in 1828. In 1830, the firm of Baudoin Frères published the first French edition. Bronterre O'Brien's English translation was published in London in 1836. Several inexpensive French abridgements, of varying lengths, appeared during the following decades, under the auspices of various radical organisations. Although no new French edition was published between 1869 (when Arthur Ranc edited his well-known abridgement for his collection of "great political trials") and 1957, Buonarroti's book was translated into German, Italian, and Russian during the present century. Its enduring value as revolutionary propaganda was recognized as recently as 1948, when a two-volume illustrated Russian edition was published in Moscow. Even more recently, in 1957, the *Conspiration Pour L'Egalité* achieved the distinction of being introduced by

²⁵ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 37-39, 41.

²⁶ Namely, the *Société des Droits de l'Homme*. See pp. 101, 122ff, *infra*. See *Bulletin de la Société Robespierre* (Jan.-March, 1911), No. 1, p. 2.

²⁷ David Thomson, *The Babeuf Plot. The Making of a Republican Legend* (London, 1947), p. 64.

Georges Lefebvre and of being republished in full as one of *Les Classiques du Peuple*.²⁸

While it seems clear from the foregoing that Buonarroti's testament retained its vitality long after its author's death, the extent to which the work was circulated and read between 1830 and 1848 is difficult to ascertain. Conflicting estimates have been made, based on conflicting evidence that, in any case, varied from country to country. O'Brien's English translation of 1836 sold 50,000 copies according to one authority.²⁹ Another notes that the original Brussels edition of 1828 was still being sold, at the price of 8 francs, in 1844.³⁰ But the complex question of the circulation of a particular work (almost impossible to weigh properly even when modern advertising makes it an urgent matter and ample statistics are available) is, in this case, not only impossible to gauge properly from the haphazard evidence available, but also not particularly relevant to the problem of estimating the impact of the work. The fact, for example, that the *Conspiration pour l'Egalité* was read by Karl Marx in 1844 and that Marx and Engels contemplated publishing a German edition (to be translated by Moses Hess)³¹ seems to be of greater significance than the number of volumes which may or may not have been sold in various European cities.

Overemphasis on this question of *numbers* of readers frequently leads scholars astray. Such overemphasis has led Gabriel Perreux, for example, in his comprehensive study of republican propaganda and secret societies in France during the early years of the Orleanist regime, to mention Buonarroti's book only once, in connection with Etienne Cabet's casual remark that it was not widely circulated in

²⁸ For full list and titles of these editions, see bibliographical essay, pp. 180-181, *infra*.

²⁹ Bernstein, *Buonarroti*, pp. 184-185.

³⁰ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 53-54n.

³¹ Lehning, "Buonarroti's Ideas . . .," *International Review of Social History* (1957), II, 282. That Marx possessed a copy of the *Conspiration* in his own extensive collection of books on the French Revolution is noted by M. Rubel, "Les Cahiers d'Etudes de Karl Marx," *International Review of Social History* (1957), II, 419.

France before 1834.³² Perhaps it was not (although probably Cabet's remark should be taken merely as an indirect tribute to the great vogue enjoyed by the work *after* 1834) but it was clandestinely circulated in France before the Revolution of 1830 permitted its publication there; it was certainly read and its lessons absorbed sufficiently by 1834 to inspire several young Frenchmen to similar efforts. Achille Roche's introduction to Levasseur's *Mémoires* has already been mentioned. Hauréau, in his two-volume "martyrology" or "funeral oration to the precursors of our work" entitled *La Montagne*, and Albert Laponneraye, in his introduction to his two-volume edition of Robespierre's works, faithfully emulated the tone of their master's work.³³

More than a year before the July Revolution, the *Conspiration pour l'Egalité* was indeed reviewed at length; its arguments were summarized, some of its most eloquent passages, quoted; and its contents, analyzed with great insight in one of the most influential French journals of the day—the *Globe*.³⁴ The reviewer, probably Charles de Rémusat, while unsympathetic to the work as a Restoration liberal was bound to be, was nonetheless sufficiently sensitive to the spell that it cast, to convey its particular appeal which was inseparable from the already legendary aura that surrounded its author and his chosen career.

Martyrs! Thus . . . M. Buonarroti calls in his heart as in his book those whose plots and death he has recounted. He writes in good faith and although one must not receive without suspicion the testimony of an

³² Gabriel Perreux, *La Propagande Républicaine au Début de la Monarchie de Juillet* (Paris, 1930), p. 271. This point is made by Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 113, 197, who refers to a slightly altered and re-titled edition—*Au Temps des Sociétés Secrètes* (Paris, 1931).

³³ B. Hauréau, *La Montagne: Notices Historiques et Philosophiques sur les Principaux Membres de la Montagne*, illust. by Jeanron (Paris, 1834), 2 vols.; A. Laponneraye, ed., *Oeuvres de Maximilien Robespierre* (Paris, 1832), 2 vols. A three-volume edition appeared in 1840-42. According to Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 235-240, both authors had been personally converted to Buonarroti's cause.

³⁴ See "C.R.," Review Article, *Globe*, No. 27 (April 4, 1829), pp. 213-215. Full text given in Galante Garrone, "Buonarroti e i Convenzionali," *Movimento Operaio*, V, Appendix 6, pp. 58-63.

interested party and although the work has all the appearances of an apology, we hold it to be generally true save for its principles. The very care taken to rehabilitate for history an obscure conspiracy and forgotten men testifies to the importance the author attaches to the event; and the tone in which he speaks is full of gravity, of faith, and a sort of piety. His whole life which, they say, is of a systematic frugality, offers itself as an application of his ideas and the proof of his sincerity. We are thus prepared to recognize with him, in the midst of the ambitious discontents, the concern for vengeance and disorder that were involved in the enterprise he recounts, the presence of an absolute and disinterested doctrine that, supported with exaltation, was the soul of a conspiracy which was the most democratic in principle that we can remember.³⁵

Whatever its circulation figures for the limited period considered by Perreux, the *Conspiration pour l'Egalité* was to represent a formidable challenge to the regime of the "juste milieu" for it fed the fantasies of those young men who figured in the novels of Stendhal, Balzac, and Flaubert, and the nonfictional police dossiers of the period, who were excluded from or, according to Lamartine, bored by the operations of the "pays légal." In its passionate evocation of the better world that had almost been realized in 1794 and especially in its idealized portrayal of the political conspirator, it made a deep and lasting impression on the "jeune France" of the Orleanist regime. Most authorities recognize that it had a considerable impact on the radical youth of the July Monarchy, who frequently spent their periods of enforced leisure in Sainte-Pélagie perusing the work,³⁶ but generally they are not precise as to the nature of this impact. According to Tchernoff, it served as "one of the foremost texts of the history of the French Revolution under the July Monarchy"³⁷ and there is no question that, in this respect, it contributed to making the reversal of the verdict of Thermidor an accepted radical shibboleth by 1848. But, as has already been noted, Buonarroti was not alone in his glorification of the defacto and de jure regime of 1793-94; there were many other survivors with

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63. The reviewer's identity is given on p. 17.

³⁶ Weill, *Parti Républicain*, p. 125.

³⁷ I. Tchernoff, *Le Parti Républicain sous la Monarchie de Juillet* (Paris, 1901), p. 80.

equally close ties to the spirit of '93 who were also playing similar roles at the same time.

Despite the interval of time between the event and his book, the *Conspiration pour l'Egalité* cannot be regarded as an historic appraisal of a revolutionary episode. Like the person of its author, it represents rather the survival of the Jacobin ethos into the nineteenth century and thanks to the printing presses of Orleanist France, even schoolboys like de Musset's "Dupont and Durand" were familiar with both the rhetoric and the spirit of 1793.³⁸ Because it is ostensibly concerned with Babeuf's conspiracy and serves as the indispensable source for anyone concerned with the development of the Babouvist "myth," there is a tendency to overlook the fact that 9 Thermidor and not the Vendôme trial represents the psychological and dramatic climax of the work. Here, it was at one with the republican movement in France which, as Perreux justly notes, tended to look to the regime of 1793 rather than to the conspiracy of 1796 for guidance.³⁹

In its orthodoxy, the work is so unoriginal, so conventional and hackneyed, that anyone familiar with the writings of Rousseau and the rhetoric of Robespierre can almost always anticipate the author's reactions on any given issue. His choice of scapegoats reveals an eighteenth-century orthodoxy as clearly as the pejorative use of certain terms—like clerico-fascist, Trotskyite, Bukharinist, capitalist-imperialist, etc.—makes manifest a revolutionary orthodoxy of the present century: "The infatuation of the atheists, the errors of the Hébertists, the immortality of the Dantonists, the humbled pride of the Girondists, the dark plots of the Royalists, the gold of England disappointed on the ninth Thermidor the hopes of the French people and of the human race."⁴⁰

One should note that the Hébertists are included in this condemnation. It is probably because he relies on Ranc's abridged version, that Maxime Leroy wrongly concludes that Buonarroti

³⁸ A. de Musset, "Dupont et Durand, Dialogue" (1838), *Poésies in Oeuvres Complètes de Alfred de Musset* (Paris, 1866), II, 193.

³⁹ Perreux, *Propagande Républicaine*, p. 271.

⁴⁰ Buonarroti (Bronterre), p. 32n.

heretically eulogized the Hébertists as "perfect revolutionaries."⁴¹ Although Buonarroti's view of this faction as "men of labour, upright, frank, courageous, not students, strangers to political theories" helped to pave the way for the Hébertist rehabilitation in the 1860's, he specifically condemned them as imperfect revolutionaries—"good citizens in an established popular Republic but bad pilots in the storms that preceded its establishment."⁴²

Denunciation was, of course, the stock in trade of the good Jacobin as well as of the experienced polemicist. But the tone of Buonarroti's work was quite unlike that of *Père Duchêne* or *L'Ami du Peuple* or of his own notes on Vadier. Both laudatory and positive, the work devoted more attention to what the author considered the admirable achievements of the Virtuous than to the sins of the Unrighteous. Perhaps the most insistent note in the work was the glorification of the Committee of Public Safety.

One cannot too much admire the prudence with which these illustrious legislators, turning reverses and victories to account with equal skill, were able to inspire the great majority of the nation with a self denial the most sublime, with contempt of riches, pleasures, and even death. . . .

. . . the astonishing metamorphosis by which so vast a population, . . . but a season before, the sport of voluptuousness, cupidity, levity, and presumption cheerfully renounced a thousand factious enjoyments, rivalled one another in zeal to offer up their superfluities on their country's altar, thundered in mass on the armies of the coalesced sovereigns and contented themselves with demanding for their *all*, bread, steel, and equality.⁴³

Buonarroti's emphasis was always on the leadership of a minority of enlightened legislators who skillfully transformed the majority of selfish individuals "as if by magic" into "one vast workshop of war." His devotion to the Constitution of 1793 was accompanied by praise for its supersession by committee government. Praise of the Constitution was tempered by the consideration that "it did not

⁴¹ Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des Idées Sociales en France—De Babeuf à Tocqueville*, Bibliothèque des Idées (Paris, 1950), p. 62, n6.

⁴² Buonarroti (Bronterre), p. 32n.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 26–27.

completely answer the wishes of the friends of humanity. One regrets to find in it the old deplorable ideas on the right of property," a failing that was, however, remedied in Robespierre's *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*. It is noteworthy that, despite this reservation, Buonarroti clung to the Constitution, defending it after the promulgation of the Constitution of Year III on grounds curiously similar to the "legitimacy" arguments propounded by Bourbon apologists after 1815, proclaiming that "those who have used violence against the Constitution of 1793" (the reference is of course to the Thermidoreans and not to the Jacobin leaders) "are guilty of high treason against the nation." The importance of the Constitution in Buonarroti's eyes seems to have been mainly its propaganda value; after its promulgation "authority and legislation became every day more popular. An enthusiasm, as sacred as it was new, seized possession of the French people." It served, in short, as an incentive that made the practice of citizenship popular.

But the true wisdom of the Jacobin leaders was shown when, after awakening the national enthusiasm,

They caused the Constitution of 1793 to be replaced (until the peace) by a form of authority which preserved to those who had commenced the great work, the power of completing it and substituted at once, for the hazards of an open war against the intestine foes of liberty, prompt and legal means of reducing them to impotence. This form was called the *revolutionary Government* and had for its directors the members of that committee of Public Safety to which humanity might owe its complete redemption, had not subsequent events destroyed all.⁴⁴

These would-be "redeemers of humanity" clearly understood that the establishment of a Republic entailed a new way of life and that the vesting of sovereignty in the people could lead to disaster unless each individual had mastered the art and science of governing himself. They

knew that before conferring on the people the exercise of sovereign power, it was necessary to render the love of virtue general—to substitute disinterestedness and modesty for avarice, vanity, and ambition. . . . They knew that the coercive and extraordinary measures indispensable to

⁴⁴ Buonarroti (Bronterre), p. 26.

operate so happy and great a change are irreconcilable with the forms of a regular organization. They knew, in short . . . that to establish, without these preliminaries, the constitutional order of elections, would be only to abandon their power to the friends of all abuses and thus lose forever the opportunity of establishing general happiness.⁴⁵

The fact was that the French people as a whole were not in a state of grace. The evil consequences of political conditioning under the Ancien Regime had left them “strangely elongated from the natural order of things” and “poorly qualified to make a useful choice.”

In his apologia for the extralegal rule of the Committee of Public Safety, Buonarroti seemed to lean, on one hand, to a doctrine of a chosen few leading the masses, who had been corrupted by centuries of aristocratic rule, along the paths of righteousness; on the other, he seemed to regard the general will as synonymous with the will of all once the small minority of unrepentant egoists had been liquidated—in either case the resort had to be coercion rather than suffrage.

To pretend to establish justice and equality without employing force amongst a people of whom *great numbers* had contracted habits and pretensions irreconcilable with the well being of the rest of society and with the just rights of all is a project as chimerical as it is seductive in theory. To undertake such a reform and then to halt at the firmness it requires, is but to avow one’s cowardice and want of foresight. It is worse—it is to sacrifice the safety of the whole to the vices of a *small number*—it is, in fact, to want virtue.⁴⁶

Like Robespierre, Buonarroti tended to play down the exhibited incapacity of the majority of citizens to make the “right” choice as a result of unfortunate political conditioning and to play up the doctrine of the degradation of the masses by a vicious minority, forever barred from admittance to the Republic, with an influence that was disproportionate to its size. Both justice and prudence, thus, demanded the purge of those

parties whose passions, aristocratic habits, and anti-social interests manifestly place them out of the pale of popular sovereignty. At a juncture of

⁴⁵ Buonarroti (Bronterre), pp. 25–26.

⁴⁶ Buonarroti (Bronterre), p. 38n. Italics mine.

this kind, the salvation of the whole depends on the terror inspired into the wicked by the rapidity with which the thunder of national justice smites a few guilty heads. It is extremely probable that a single additional act of severity in France at that time [1794] would have secured to the human race a complete and everlasting victory over its enemies.⁴⁷

Buonarroti coupled his apology for the Committee of Public Safety with a somewhat ambiguous defense of the Terror as a weapon of intimidation as well as of liquidation. It was clear, in any case, that the disaster of Thermidor resulted from failure to employ this weapon more energetically—an important lesson to be learned by the revolutionist of the future. But the liquidation of the self-alienated minority—that “one additional act of severity”—was only a first step toward the attainment of the Good Society. The main task of transforming a corrupted people into a virtuous nation remained and here “the skillful legislator attaches the people . . . by their own free choice . . . here the masterpiece of policy consists in modifying the human heart by education, by example, by reasoning, and by the attractions of pleasure as to cause it never to form any desires than those which tend to render society more free, more happy, and more durable.”⁴⁸

On this crucial question of “modifying the human heart” Buonarroti, as one might expect, took for his texts Rousseau’s “man must be forced to be free” and Robespierre’s “despotism of liberty against tyranny.” At one point, it is true, he wrote that “occupations such as athletics, education, the use of arms, religion, public games and festivals, public administration” should not be “commanded by law” but should remain “voluntary and unconstrained.” The two latter terms were, however, always subject to, what one might call after Orwell, the Jacobin version of “doublethink” where “voluntary” could under certain conditions mean “compulsory” and “unconstrained” could be construed as “coerced.”

The young readers of the 1830’s were told that in the new social order “the country takes possession of every individual at birth and never quits him till death.” Young men should be initiated into French society by a solemn oath and ceremony complete with the

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

presentation of a suit of armor. They were to be subject to military service and "constantly encamped on the borders of the Republic" as an object lesson to the "servile soldiery of all the despots of Europe." Public festivals, military burials, monuments, and athletic contests all should be "calculated to exalt the soul and preserve the martial spirit of arms." The official religion would be Robespierre's cult of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul. Worship would be limited to respect for Rousseau's social contract, the defense of equality, and public festivals.

The printing and distribution of "all writings" was to depend on whether "the conservators of the National Will" judged "their publication useful to the Republic." Arts and sciences were to be discouraged—the former led to "a taste for superfluities, disgust at simple manners, the love of voluptuousness and frivolities" while scientists tended to "become superior." As Jean-Jacques had pointed out: "never were morality and liberty united with a brilliant state of arts and sciences." Since preoccupation with "fashion and frivolity" was antipathetic to civic virtue, clothes were to be strictly utilitarian with uniforms allotted on the basis of age and occupation. The magistrates would direct foreign trade to safeguard against the "contagion of pernicious example which might otherwise enervate the force of manners and the love of equality. No pains would have been spared to keep away all persons who would introduce frivolities and foreign fashions; the curious would have been subjected to rude tests and to a severe surveillance."⁴⁹

Indeed the commercial institutions of the new society would be so ordered that the nation would never be trapped into espousing "the quarrels of its merchants—a race of vampires that would be unknown to the country." The major economic problems of the nineteenth century would be solved quite simply by turning the clock back, by legislating the industrial revolution out of existence. The physiocrat's dream of a self-sufficient agrarian economy, protected by tariff walls, would result: "Agricultural, simple, happy . . . the love of pillage would be as foreign to it as the passion for foreign conquests." The growth of the urban center as an accompaniment

⁴⁹ Buonarroti (Bronterre), p. 191.

to business activity would be discouraged. The metropolis would be made to reassume its proper function as the civic center of virtue rather than its present position as a cesspool of vice, by reserving large scale construction for public edifices—amphitheatres, aqueducts, bridges, archival deposits, libraries, and above all, the houses of the Government.

The economic legislation of the Terror would be continued and extended so that most of the wealth of the country would be nationalized. The poor would readily agree to exchange their rights to their meagre holdings for membership in “a grand national community which maintains all its members in an equal and honorable mediocrity.” The wealthy, whose possessions did not come under the contemplated legislation, would be so heavily taxed and so unfavorably treated that their only resort would be emigration or the “voluntary” surrender of their possessions. People who indulged in indolence, luxury, or loose living, who, in short, behaved as members of a leisured class were guilty of “incivisme” and would be condemned to forced labor. The possession of gold would be rendered more useless and burdensome than the possession of “sand and stones.” Since the entire society would be structured against special privilege, direct expropriation would be rendered unnecessary. With this effective exclusion of the “economic man” from the Republic, those conflicting interests which impeded the formation of a “general will” would cease to exist. “The science of government, which the collision of so many opposing interests renders at present so very intricate, is reduced by the system of community to a single calculation, scarcely beyond the capacity of anyone.”⁵⁰

In short, every activity that separated the individual from the state—or, in Jacobin terms, that undermined his political mastery of himself—whether religious, commercial, intellectual, aesthetic, or merely frivolous should be oppressed. The “human heart” would be made to function only as an organ of the “body politic.” The family unit should be undermined; perhaps children should be forbidden “to bear the name of a father who had not distinguished

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 227–231; 418–426.

himself by great virtues" in the total effort to make "love of country" the "predominant passion" of the citizenry.

The legislator would have been able to render all affections of family and kindred subordinate to this sentiment; he could have rendered it so intense and active that the truly fraternal union of all Frenchmen would, in all probability, have been its happy and astounding consequence. This reflection constituted the delight of our conspirators and was the animating soul of all their projects.⁵¹

Buonarroti's version of that brave new world whose birth was aborted by the Thermidorean coup has recently received some attention from scholars concerned with the development of European socialist thought.⁵² This is only to be expected, in the light of Arthur Lehning's statement that Buonarroti's book "caused not only a revival of the Jacobin tradition under the July Monarchy but also introduced for the first time the ideology of state communism and dictatorship in the history of European socialism."⁵³ For reasons already put forth, the first part of this statement, with its suggestion that a single book "caused" a national tradition to revive, cannot be accepted without qualification. But the second part seems worth pondering and accounts, in large part, for the inclusion of the *Conspiration pour l'Egalité* in recent surveys of European socialism. Because of their special focus, however, most of these works tend to emphasize the debt Buonarroti owed to the Mably-Morelly tradition without giving equal weight to the debt owed to Rousseau's works and especially to the words and deeds of the men of '93. Mr. Grey, for example, maintains that "what most impresses us in reading Buonarroti is our nearness to Mably and Morelly" and he is able to cite an accurate plagiarism from the latter.⁵⁴ Yet when Carlton Hayes attempted to describe the "various elements which,

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁵² See, for example, Elie Halévy, *Histoire de Socialisme Européen, Rédigée d'après des notes de cours par un groupe d'amis et d'élèves* (Paris, 1948); M. Leroy, *Idées Sociales—II*; Alexander Grey, *The Socialist Tradition—Moses to Lenin* (London, 1947).

⁵³ Lehning, "Buonarroti's Ideas . . ." *International Review of Social History* (1957), II, 282.

⁵⁴ Grey, *Socialist Tradition*, p. 106n.

together, constitute Jacobin nationalism" by drawing from "the more or less philosophical writings and speeches of Carnot and Barère, and from the sayings and especially the doings of the Girondists and Mountainists," his sketch reproduced most of the basic outlines of Buonarroti's "one and indivisible, democratic and republican, egalitarian and secular," edifice.⁵⁵

Buonarroti's work has also received considerable attention recently from J. L. Talmon in his controversial study of *The Rise of Totalitarian Democracy* for it is a landmark in the movement he attempted to define: "As we are in this work primarily interested in the shaping of the religion and myth of Revolutionary political Messianism, we have to give to Buonarroti's picture of his heavenly city a place of honour as one of the important elements, alongside others, in the nascent religion of the totalitarian-democratic Revolution."⁵⁶ Buonarroti's detailed description of the ultimate transformation of the "human heart" into an organ of the body politic after the necessary liquidation of a self-alienated minority; his insistence on the suppression of every institutionalized activity that might distract the individual from the performance of his civic duties suggest, at the very least, that the work is by an enemy of Mr. Popper's "open society." Indeed both the text and the spirit of the work seem to prefigure, with remarkable exactitude, a recent description of the "totalitarian mystique" by an acute observer of contemporary Soviet society.⁵⁷

Of course, one must beware of joining the company of those who indulge in what one might call guilt by historic association. There is always the danger of distorting Buonarroti's vision by viewing it, not in its proper historical context, but only in relation to later developments which he could not have foreseen—such as the advantages that might accrue to amoral dictators from the calculated

⁵⁵ Carlton J. H. Hayes, *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York, 1931), pp. 50, 52.

⁵⁶ J. L. Talmon, *The Rise of Totalitarian Democracy* (Boston, 1951), p. 231.

⁵⁷ Alex Inkeles, "The Totalitarian Mystique: Some Impressions of the Dynamics of Totalitarian Society," in *Totalitarianism: Proceedings of a Conference held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, March, 1953, ed. Carl J. Friedrich (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), pp. 87-108, see esp. pp. 93-97.

manipulation of a passive, anonymous mass mind. To understand the appeal of his work, one must remember that Buonarroti did not regard the vocation of the self-disciplined citizen as passive or submissive; to the contrary, it required strong moral fibre and a strenuous exertion of will power to govern oneself properly. His approach to society was rooted more in the neoclassic conception of a "republic" and the principle of "virtue" with which it was associated, than in the "socialist tradition." His approach, moreover, reflected a transitional ethos that is not altogether adequately described by the term "totalitarian democracy."

There is no accepted nomenclature for this ethos because it has almost always been viewed only in terms of its antecedents and its successors. Its transitional character is suggested by the puzzlement with which many historians regard the intense concern exhibited by many nineteenth-century Frenchmen over the question of regime. Because there seemed to be very little at stake in choosing between the republican ministry of M Thiers and the monarchical ministry of M Guizot, there is a tendency to overlook the persistence of an earlier belief that a distinctive "way of life" went with different political regimes. It is this belief that accounts not only for many of the barricades that were raised in the early nineteenth century, but also for many of the traits which seem most "totalitarian" in Buonarroti's ultimate scheme. Many of these same traits may be found in the writings not only of Plato but also of Aristotle, not only of Machiavelli but also of Montesquieu. All these philosophers tended, for the sake of abstract analysis, to make the human heart function as an organ of the body politic; they all agreed, moreover, that virtue was the "soul of the Republic." There are obviously aspects of contemporary totalitarian societies that were not dreamed of in the philosophies of these men—nor in those of Mably, Morelly, or Rousseau for that matter. And, in any case, dreams must not be confused with institutional systems.⁵⁸

On the other hand, the extralegal regime of 1792-94 *was* an institutional system. It may have developed simply as a transient

⁵⁸ This is the basis of many criticisms of Talmon's book. See C. J. Friedrich, "The Nature of Totalitarianism," in *Totalitarianism*, p. 58.

response to a situation of unprecedented emergency, but the First Republic was clearly not an "interregnum." Mr. Talmon is not merely toying with the genealogy of ideas but attempting to describe the mystique which crystallized about this system. Monsieur Lefebvre may object to the use of certain posthumously published writings—like Saint Just's *Institutions Républicaines*—to describe the "mentality of Jacobins of the First Republic who had never read them."⁵⁹ Surely, however, such writings may legitimately be used to describe the mentality of those Jacobins of the First Republic who wrote them. Buonarroti's work is important precisely because it was written long after the event and thus shows that the implications of the characteristic institutions of 1792–94 had not been exhausted when the emergency had come to an end. After its appearance, later generations tended to accept or reject the Republic of Virtue in terms of a work which not only glorified the *defacto* and *dejure* regime of 1793 but offered as well an imaginative projection of this regime into a postrevolutionary peacetime era. The formation of a mentality which regarded this institutional system not as a disillusioning experience nor as a regrettable necessity but as the pinnacle of human achievement seems to me, as it does to Mr. Talmon, to be an historic event of some consequence and worth a careful investigation.

Buonarroti's particular amalgam of the eighteenth-century utopias of Mably and Morelly, of the pre-revolutionary theories of Rousseau, of the revolutionary experiences of Robespierre, and of the post-Thermidorean tactics of the Babouvists was in its function, as well as in its contents, a hybrid work. Although it is unaccountably omitted by Edmund Wilson in his "study of the writing and acting of history," it is clearly a landmark on the road that could be traced "to the Finland Station," if a less circuitous route had been followed.⁶⁰ For the *Conspiration pour*

⁵⁹ G. Lefebvre, Review Article, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (1953), XXV, 182.

⁶⁰ Edmund Wilson, *To the Finland Station: A Study in the Writing and Acting of History* (New York, 1940). Buonarroti's name appears once in the index of this edition but I could find it nowhere in the text. In keeping with this omission, Babeuf is regarded as a figure unknown to nineteenth-century

l'Egalité provided not only a monument to the past and a vision of the future, but a call to action in the present as well. Explicitly, it was concerned with what might have occurred if the events of Thermidor had not jolted the Revolution off its course or if the Babouvists had succeeded in jolting it back on to the right track. Implicitly, it was concerned with what might still occur if the new generation had inherited some of their ancestors' revolutionary energy and heroic resolution. The contrast between the values represented by the spartan utopia which had been, according to Buonarroti, on the point of realization in 1794 and those represented by the ruling groups of the Bourbon and Orleanist regimes was particularly striking. It is not surprising that the work was popular among those who felt excluded from the "pays légal," nor that the opponents of "Monsieur Prudhomme" should model themselves on the heroes of the Great Revolution as portrayed by one who survived. Many young men who were unable or unwilling to devote their lives to the goal made famous by Guizot's advice "Enrichissez-vous" were to find in Buonarroti's tribute to the martyred conspirators an irresistible summons to an heroic life. In this respect as elsewhere, however, it is difficult to disassociate the impact of Buonarroti's book from the contributions made by its author in person. For the July Revolution not only permitted the publication of a French edition of the *Conspiration pour l'Egalité* but also put an end to his years of exile and allowed him to return to his spiritual homeland.

Frenchmen except as a "bugbear" (p. 79) and the French revolutionary tradition, drained of its vital radical content, is traced to a dead end (chaps. 6, 7, 8).

The Revolutionist and the “Monde” (1830—1837)

Are we on the eve of great changes, or are we not? Is everything that is gathering force underground in the dark, in the night, in the little hidden rooms out of sight of governments and policemen and idiotic “statesmen”—heaven save them!—is all this going to burst forth some fine morning and set the world on fire? Or is it to sputter out and spend itself in vain conspiracies, be dissipated in sterile heroisms and abortive isolated movements?

Henry James, *The Princess Casamassima*

In order to appreciate the direction and scope of Buonarroti's efforts after 1830, both levels of his double life have to be considered once again. His connections with the various radical movements in Europe during the 1830's must be considered in relation to the existence of his own personal organization, namely the successor to the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits, the Monde that has been referred to earlier. As a republican propagandist and agitator who openly campaigned in France for universal suffrage and a graduated income tax, for example, he was to appear in the guise of a typical, albeit somewhat advanced nineteenth-century radical reformer. “If he were still alive,” wrote Robiquet in 1910, “he would have a chance of being named Finance Minister.”¹ But Buonarroti's ultimate scheme surely was not adequately represented by the reforms advocated by M. Joseph Caillaux. His conspiratorial activities were directed toward a different goal, toward the sacred end to which

¹ P. Robiquet, *Buonarroti et la Secte des Egaux* (Paris, 1910), p. 183.

he had committed himself when he left Florence, one that was explicitly revealed in his untitled notebook concerning the organization of the Monde.²

This important work has been published in full by Signor Saitta. It reveals, perhaps more vividly than the *Conspiration pour L'Egalité* (which inevitably suffers from the various ambiguities inherent in a work written thirty years after the event it recounts) the crystallization of the "mentality" delineated by Mr. Talmon—as one might expect, *Emile* and the works of Mably are required reading for the initiated. It sets forth the way of life expected of the "new men" who were chosen to build the new world and who had, therefore, to be immune to the attractions of the old one. The members of the "order" are defined as an elite, existing in the midst of an almost universal corruption, hoping, by setting an example in their own conduct, to rekindle in humanity some sparks of "virtue." The reckless adventurer, the self-seeking charlatan, the unstable enthusiast, who would be naturally attracted to the career of conspiracy, were specifically excluded from the organization. Only men of "good character" could meet the exacting standards of the new profession. "The signs by which one may recognize whether a man is worthy of initiation" were the following:

Devotion to the principles of the order and willingness to sacrifice to them personal interests and pleasure.

Courage, that is to say, scorn of danger, of work and hardship.

Reflection, gravity, prudence.

Respect for the forms, for the allegories, for the hierarchy and for the scale of grades.

Patience and perseverance.

Scorn for wealth, position, men, and power.

A modest, sober, and regulated life.

Inviolable respect for the word, the promise, and the vow.

Willingness to overlook personal wrongs.

Moderation in the use of intoxicating liquors.

The habit of speaking little and to the point.

² For account of original manuscript, now in the *Istituto Mazziniano* (formerly the *Museo del Risorgimento*) in Genoa, see Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 103, n64. The full text is given in II, 91-117.

No wish to make an impression, to shine, and to impose oneself.

Caution in gambling, in love, in anger, and in the opening of one's heart.

Exquisite sensibility concerning the wrongs that weigh on humanity.³

Only by the most careful application of these criteria in the selection of recruits could the order form "an elite corps capable of realizing the great goal of its organization and its efforts."

This mission was to conserve "in their purity the lessons which the great events of the French Revolution have willed us" and ultimately to found a new social order on the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. As guardians of this legacy, commemorated in the order's symbolism and ritual, the members celebrated on certain dates, such as July 14, a "sacred fire" that was still burning:

The recollection of the Day whose anniversary we are celebrating carries reassurance for the future, this memory is full of hope; it shows us what the people can do when they are well directed; it teaches us to believe that the people still understand liberty, that they are not as debased as their oppressors would wish, and that in an instant they can rise as one to break their chains and reclaim their rights.⁴

The desire for liberty was "the lever of Archimedes, we have the people for the fulcrum, we will again raise the world."

But true liberty should not be confused with the self-indulgence of the aristocratic libertine or the anarchic savage. It demanded, to the contrary, the self-control of a virtuous citizen and was indissolubly linked to the great principle of equality, to "the equitable division of power and wealth." The order specifically denounced "that egotistical philosophy that gives man no other motivation than his immediate personal satisfaction." It insisted on "the reality of a natural law that links all men to the rights of their fellow men by an obligation graven on the conscience." To reinforce the sense of this categorical imperative, it was necessary to introduce the notion of a Supreme Being who justly distributes rewards and punishments in another life.

³ Saitta, II, 100-101.

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 91-92.

But even while admitting the existence of a supreme legislator and an immortal existence, the order rejects every kind of positive revelation; the only way of pleasing the Divinity is the manifestation of good will and charity to all men, without regard for nationality, religion, fortune, or race. It is neither Christian nor Jewish, nor pagan, nor Brahmin, nor Moslem; it regards the traditions and the books attributed to the Divinity as human inventions, and rejects as superstitious, all the practices and all the beliefs that have been recommended by them.⁵

Incredulity was forbidden, however, when it came to "the divine dogma of the love of the future," "the principle of moral equality among all men," and the submission of all to the "general will" (elsewhere defined as those laws which "the citizen is free in obeying") which is "the only legitimate authority, the unique source of all magistracy and all power."

The general "plan" of the order was "to extend itself without being noticed everywhere in order to arrive at a point where, constituting an invisible army, it can snare in its nets all the tyrannies." It was "destined to cover the globe; it has already spread roots over a vast surface." Individual members, however, should not concern themselves with the total picture, but rather confine their efforts to action within their own country. A member must give himself entirely to the order which "according to his oath, he must value above everything else."

A twentieth-century historian, confronted with this fragment of a "sacred" book of an order which has long since vanished into obscurity (from which, as a matter of fact, it never really did emerge), finds it difficult to adopt any other attitude than that of the amused irony—reserved for Esperanto enthusiasts today—that led to Heine's epitaph on the futile efforts of the Incorruptible: "Poor Robespierre, you wished to introduce republican severity to Paris, where one hundred and fifty thousand modistes, perfumers, and hairdressers ply their trade."⁶ To take seriously, or at face value the vast claims and conspiratorial pretensions of Buonarroti's secret

⁵ Saitta, II, 97-98.

⁶ H. Heine, *De la France* (Paris, 1872), Letter of January 19, 1832, p. 41.

"order" suggests a lack of a sense of proportion that is fatal to the cultivation of the art of history. Set against its contemporary background of an impervious nineteenth-century European order that was soon to attain the golden age of the Victorian equilibrium, Buonarroti's plan for international conspiracy seems romantic, antiquated, vague, and futile—the work of a "crank" who had outlived his times.

A proper sense of proportion seems to be restored when one turns one's attention from the written word to the world of political reality and looks, for example, at the dismal failure of Louis De Potter in Belgium or of James Bronterre O'Brien in England. The triumphant arrival of De Potter at the Brussels Town Hall in 1830 represented the "first time in the history of the nineteenth century that a man closely linked with Buonarroti found himself at the head of a government emerging from a victorious revolution and attempted to impose, in the course of the revolution, a program of action that was typically buonarrotian."⁷

The difference between Buonarroti's capacity for training professional revolutionists and his dream of training future republican legislators is suggested by the end product of this adventure in king-making; namely a brochure by the would-be first president of a republic that never materialized, with a title that revealed its contents: "De la Révolution à Faire d'après l'Expérience des Révolutions Avortées" (1831).⁸ Similarly the collapse of the Chartist movement in England was to leave only a few literary efforts to testify to Buonarroti's influence on one of its leaders. *The Life and Character of Maximilian Robespierre* (1837) which was discontinued after the first volume due to a "'dark, cruel, and systematic private and public persecution' on the part of the English middle class, who feared . . . exposure of their 'System of fraud and murder'" and *An Elegy on the Death of Robespierre*, a poem in twenty parts (1857),

⁷ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 148. For full account of this episode, see M. Battistini, *Filippo Buonarroti nel Belgio e le sue Relazioni con Luigi De Potter* (Livorno, 1931).

⁸ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 146–148.

are of interest only to the academic specialist and the collector of curiosities.⁹

In the field of propaganda and journalism, however, if not in the field of practical politics, Buonarroti's efforts left a mark in Belgium and England. On the pages of a polemical journal, *Le Radical*, a group of young Belgians (among them was Felix Delhasse), who had known the veteran conspirator during his stay in Brussels, kept alive his memory and cause. Jottrand, a founding editor, was to become in 1847, president of a Democratic Association in Brussels that numbered Karl Marx among its vice-presidents.¹⁰ In England, Bronterre O'Brien's contributions to the *Destructive and Poor Man's Conservative*, the *Two Penny Dispatch*, the *London Dispatch*, the *National Reformer*, and especially the *Poor Man's Guardian* provided an ample platform for the expression of "his almost religious devotion to the figures of Robespierre, Babeuf, and Buonarroti" and provided also the foundations for what, in England, would always seem an eccentric, "continental" approach to the problems of reform.¹¹

Belgium and England were to be two of the strongest bulwarks of that constitutional monarchy based on a parliamentary system and the broad consent of the middle classes that Buonarroti identified with "the Order of Egoism or the Aristocratic System." In Italian affairs, which would seem to provide, on the surface at least, more easily troubled waters and which absorbed a great deal of the conspiratorial energy of his organization, Buonarroti's work resulted specifically in the fiasco of a badly mismanaged expedition of Lyonnaise volunteers to Savoy in 1831. Apart from an academic controversy over whether or not it was preceded by a pact with Lafayette, this expedition was inconsequential.¹² But Buonarroti's

⁹ Titles given by J. M. Thompson, *Robespierre* (New York, 1936), I, xxx, xxxvi-xxxvii.

¹⁰ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 400-409.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 427.

¹² A full account of expedition is given by F. Rude, "La Première Expédition de Savoie (Février 1831)," *Revue Historique* (1940), vols. 188-189, pp. 413-443. Buonarroti's role and his accord with Lafayette is discussed by Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 183-187, and Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 183-189.

work also resulted in an important schism in the Risorgimento. His persistent efforts to exploit national unrest in the interests of his personal revolutionary program ended in a final break, with the excommunication of Mazzini and his Giovine Italia—magic names, which would remain in Italian memories long after the figure of Buonarroti and the various societies he infiltrated or organized like the Società dei Militi Apofasimeni, the Società dei Veri Italiani, the Giunta Liberatrice Italiana would be relegated to specialists in the confusing internal history of the movement.

Only such a specialist is indeed competent to disentangle Buonarroti's role, to trace the complicated relationship between the Italian and the French sections of the Carbonari and the Monde; and to claim, as Signor Saitta does, that the domination of the Giunta Liberatrice by a three-member Direttorio Liberatore, which included Buonarroti, linked the Italian Giunta to all the "varied organisms which, in a quasi-microcosmic form, existed in France as a future Europe."¹³ Even to the nonspecialist, however, it is clear that Buonarroti never regarded Italy as the major battleground for his "invisible army"; the decisive battle had to be waged in France. The famous remark "when France sneezes, Europe catches cold" represented precisely the state of affairs toward which Buonarroti's intrigues were directed. His self-appointed mission was to organize and prepare local societies throughout Italy that would extend and intensify the tremors sent out by a Parisian explosion (he would provide the dynamite there) until the despotic regimes—which, after the eighteenth-century cataclysm, had been shakily restored on the topsoil of history—were wrecked forever. Buonarroti's ultimate tactical scheme thus brought him into frequent contact with the leaders of the Risorgimento, but this contact was tangential and often involved conflict. Only at certain points did the aims of the Monde and those of the various Italian societies meet; while there were many areas of divergence. In his attitude toward nineteenth-century Italian developments, Buonarroti was still transfixed by the Medusa's Head of the First Republic; to think of these developments

¹³ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 181.

as separate from a Jacobin mystique radiating from Paris was impossible for the erstwhile French agent of Oneglia.

His insistence on the necessity of waiting for a signal from Paris conflicted with the concept of "iniziativa Italiana" which was being vigorously advocated by a fellow North Italian residing in France. The clash came to a head when Mazzini's plan for a new expedition to Savoy in 1833 was condemned by Buonarroti on the various contradictory grounds

that internal conditions in Italy were absolutely unfavorable for such an attempt; that hope for an immediate republican revolution in France (which Buonarroti considered as the normal presupposition for any attempt in Italy) was a mirage; that many influential men in *Young Italy* were aristocratic in spirit and thus, in the event of a victorious insurrection an arid and ambitious aristocracy would triumph; that Mazzini was insufficiently preoccupied with the social character of his republic and with preestablishing the outlines of its future constitution.¹⁴

He issued a circular to the Charbonnerie Démocratique Universelle forbidding all members to participate in Mazzini's project. This so-called edict of excommunication marked the definitive breach and Mazzini soon after gave the expected reply, accusing all of Buonarroti's organizations—the reformed Carbonari, the Monde, the Veri Italiani—of being subjugated "to the French yoke." The character of Buonarroti's attack suggests that he tended to rationalize in the most lofty terms his personal distrust of any leadership save his own; it seems clear from the tone of the argument that the quarrel over "initiative" was personal as well as ideological. The two men were never close friends; although they had been earlier on amicable terms and Buonarroti had contributed, at Mazzini's invitation, an important article to the journal *La Giovine Italia*.¹⁵ Mazzini tended to be contemptuous and impatient with the "antiquated" methods of the "senile" veteran while Buonarroti was suspicious of the "ambitious" intriguer.

¹⁴ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 382.

¹⁵ This article, signed "Camillo" and entitled "Del Governo di un Popolo in Rivolta per Conseguire la Libertà" appeared in February, 1833, but was probably written in 1831. See Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 217.

From this conflict, a familiar pattern emerged. The clash of two strong personalities with similar backgrounds and the resultant jockeying for leadership of a revolutionary movement; the nationalist—international controversy with its various ideological and tactical implications; the eventual schism resulting in the emergence of two separate competing organizations (in this case the *Veri Italiani* and *Giovine Italia*), and giving rise to mutual name-calling and vindictive rancor which seem to fan rather than quench the revolutionary flames—all this was to become increasingly familiar in the course of the next century and a half. The histories of the First, Second, and Third Internationals would be crowded with such incidents. The disputes between the two German Jews, Marx and Lassalle, which ended in the schism between the First International and the German Socialist Party, seem to offer a particularly neat parallel; but of course historical analogies of this sort should not be pressed too far. In most respects, Buonarroti resembled Bakunin much more closely than he did the famous frequenter of the British Museum who excommunicated the Russian from the First International. Mr. Samuel Bernstein finds a pattern similar to the Buonarroti-Mazzini quarrel in Marx's and Engels' opposition to Herwegh's scheme for German refugees in 1848.¹⁶ Actually this pattern had already been traced in the foreign policy debates between Brissot and Robespierre before the Jacobin Club in eighteenth-century Paris. It formed a secular parallel to the Gallican-Ultramontanist controversy that would not be fully elaborated until the twentieth century, when the "new Rome" moved to Moscow.

It is important to note that Buonarroti's "internationalism" was always tempered by his loyalty to the eighteenth century "new Rome;" his quarrel with Mazzini involved a noncosmopolitan insistence on French initiative. It is misleading to conclude, as does Dr. Lehning, that because Buonarroti always identified "the interests of a revolutionary France" with "that of the peoples to be liberated," he was "an internationalist and . . . personified the best humanistic traditions of eighteenth century cosmopolitanism and the

¹⁶ Bernstein, *Buonarroti*, pp. 229-231.

universal appeal of the French Revolution.”¹⁷ This passage begs several important questions. One might argue that the character of eighteenth-century cosmopolitanism, which matured in the pre-revolutionary era, was radically transformed by the events of 1789. Furthermore, the universal appeal of the French Revolution is one thing; the narrower appeal of Buonarroti’s “authorised version” of that Revolution is another. In any case, it seems necessary to distinguish between the viewpoint of a “good European,” of a man like Goethe, for example, and the viewpoint represented by Buonarroti. The term “internationalist” should not be applied to Buonarroti simply because he attacked an Italian nationalist any more than it should be applied to those who attack Yugoslavian or Hungarian nationalists today. His quarrel with Mazzini was not over whether any single nation should be invested with the mission of redeeming humanity; but over which nation was invested with the mission, France or Italy? Although it is unsatisfactory in some respects, the term “Jacobin nationalism” still serves better than any other term to describe the complex value system which led Buonarroti to regard the Parisian revolutionaries as a “chosen people.”

Arthur Lehning regards Buonarroti’s position vis-à-vis Mazzini as that of a humanistic cosmopolite. Samuel Bernstein, who also points unfavorably to Mazzini’s chauvinism, portrays Buonarroti as a “revolutionary realist” whose policy was thwarted by Mazzini’s romantic idealism and mystical obscurantism.¹⁸ Yet it is clear that the two Italians thought of their respective roles in precisely opposite terms; as Cantimori suggests Buonarroti’s position with respect to Mazzini was very similar to the position Mazzini was later to assume with respect to Cavour: “Aside from the other contrasts, political realism appeared to the utopian and the reformer, who was thinking more in terms of the moral regeneration of the nation than in terms of a practical and definite purpose, as egoism and opportunism: as in another situation Mazzini would find him-

¹⁷ Lehning, “Buonarroti and his Secret Societies,” *International Review of Social History*, I, 139.

¹⁸ Bernstein, *Buonarroti*, p. 226.

self judging the work of Cavour."¹⁹ Moreover, as Signor Galante Garrone has shown, Mazzini when a refugee in France sympathized with the more moderate elements in the Republican movement, with French nationalists, like Armand Carrel and Godefroy Cavaignac, whose patriotic admiration for the Convention was non-sectarian, and with practical politicians who refused to join either the "queue de Danton" or the "queue de Robespierre." His friendship with Demosthène Ollivier and the Marseillaise republicans aligned him with a tradition that was to culminate in the "opportunism" of Gambetta and Ferry.²⁰ In terms of the domestic political spectrum in France, there is no question that Buonarroti was closer to the "utopian," extremist fringe than Mazzini.

Of course, in the hands of present-day masters of "double think" or "Aesopian" jargon, the term "revolutionary realism" may well mean the opposite of what ordinary people mean by political realism—indeed the whole matter is becoming as semantically confused as the question of philosophical realism became in medieval metaphysics. (It used to be the fashion of conservatives, following Burke, to accuse the eighteenth-century revolutionists of being abstract and unrealistic and the fashion of republican apologists to congratulate themselves in the idealism of their forbears; but now, as Hegel has given way to Marx, the shoe is on the other foot; the moderates are accused of being doctrinaire and impractical while the extremist policy of "no enemies to the Left" is considered as the model of statesmanlike acumen.²¹) It is clear, at any rate, that the quarrel between Mazzini and Buonarroti involved more than the question of revolutionary initiative; ends as well as means were at stake. For Buonarroti "the end of the insurrection did not signify the advent of liberty; it was not, as in the doctrinaire liberalism of the times, a system of constitutional and legislative guarantees, but uniquely and simply—as Buonarroti rousseauistically insisted—"the submission of all to the truly general will."²² Against Mazzini's

¹⁹ Cantimori, *Utopisti e Riformatori*, p. 147.

²⁰ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 377.

²¹ See, for example, Lefebvre's attack on Sieyès as an "intellectual," "an abstract rationalist who fails to give any consideration to experience" in *Etudes*, p. 99.

²² Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 125.

typically liberal notion of a constitutional government to be determined by free elections based on universal suffrage, Buonarroti maintained that "experience had . . . shown . . . that the people are incapable of either regenerating themselves or of designating the people who must direct the regeneration. That before thinking of a Constitution and of fixed laws, it is necessary to establish a reforming or revolutionary government on other bases than those of a regular and peaceful liberty."²³ His position here again evoked the regime that had been founded on the coup of August 10, 1792. It provided a solution that was to tempt some French republicans (notably Blanqui) after the collapse of the Orleanist Monarchy in 1848 and, later, of the Second Empire in 1870 when resort to universal suffrage seemed likely to imperil the attainment of a Republic.

It was with respect to this question of the inauguration of a revolutionary government to cleanse the slate before installing a more democratic regime for the "regenerated" citizens that Buonarroti's revolutionary "realism" clashed with Mazzini's idealized, quasi-mystical concept of the "people." But contempt for legal solutions and willingness to employ terror do not necessarily reveal contact with reality. Despite the fact that his head seemed sometimes to be in the clouds, Mazzini's feet were (figuratively speaking at least) more closely in touch with Italian soil. His ultimate scheme for his country probably was more in accord with its possible future than Buonarroti's. From the point of view of timing and tactics, however, Buonarroti proved to be the professional and Mazzini the amateur. The former's preference for watchful waiting (which Mazzini impatiently dismissed as senile impotence), for indirect propaganda, semilegal agitation, and secret preparation, as well as his insistence on the critical area for operation was partially vindicated by the two Revolutions which first installed and then deposed Louis Philippe.

²³ Citation from untitled document among Buonarroti manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale, published in full under different titles by Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, Appendix, p. 497, and by Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 138-139.

The Revolutionist at Home (1830—1837)

I. RE-ENTRY TO THE "PROMISED LAND"

"No, that's not taken from the French," Liputin cried with positive fury. "That is taken from the universal language of humanity, not simply from the French, from the language of the universal social republic and the harmony of mankind!"

Dostoevsky, *The Possessed*

Even before the three days of July 1830 brought in their wake France's version of her "glorious revolution," Buonarroti was formulating an attack from the Left on the government of the "juste milieu." In February 1829 he wrote to his friend Mme Vadier:

The Bourbons have not taken root in the French heart, let us hope that this is a symptom of virtue and love of liberty. . . . I don't doubt that there are still germs of true patriotism in the working people but the vices and falsity of the gilded class horrify me and I am more fearful of their liberal phrases than of foreign bayonets since the former lull to sleep and poison, while a well united and awakened People would soon give the latter their just deserts. Can one listen in cold blood to their rejoicing over the pretended alliance of royalty with liberty? You will soon see them become ministers, falling with might and main on all those who dare invoke the rights of the People. This fine alliance is nothing more than a transaction between old rogues and new rogues.¹

¹ Letter to Mme Vadier from "Raymond" February 19, 1829 in Galante Garrone, "Buonarroti e i Convenzionali," *Movimento Operaio*, VII, 32.

"What would the great man have said," he wrote Charles Teste ten days after the July Revolution, "if he had seen an Orleans get away with the fruit of so many years of work, of suffering, and of revolutions?"² Despite his abhorrence of the new regime, he recognized nonetheless that the July Monarchy would allow him scope to operate from Paris and by August 10 he was writing to facilitate his re-entry to the city which had always been for him—as it was to be for the generation of revolutionaries who followed him—"the Promised Land." He returned to Paris after thirty-odd years of exile, unshaken in his resolve to continue the work he had been forced to interrupt in 1796, convinced that the resurrection of the pre-Thermidorean Republic was still possible. "To the mind of the old friend of Robespierre and of Babeuf the days of July, 1830 continued to present themselves in terms of absolute fidelity to the past: the triumph of Orleans did not count; the new revolution was not composed of a single act and as 1789 gave way to August 10, 1792 and the Convention, so a new 1793 would follow this new 1789."³

It is characteristic of the peculiar pattern of French politics during the nineteenth century that this single-minded obsession with events that had transpired many decades before, should have assured Buonarroti of a voice among the most radical young Parisians of the 1830's. Once again Signor Galante Garrone's warning concerning the danger of overrating "buonarrotismo" should be underlined. Although it is difficult not to agree with Signor Saitta's criticism of Perreux's study: "It is with real wonder that one sees how G. Perreux in *Au Temps des Sociétés Secrètes* has been able to write a book of four hundred pages on the activities of the republican groups in France from 1830 to 1835 (a work that is in other respects well informed and based on direct research in the archives) dedicating to Buonarroti only two lines,"⁴ and although Tchernoff's study of the republican movement from 1830-1848 also fails to give Buonarroti the prominence he deserves, still these

² Letter to Teste from "Laurent," August 7, 1830, in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 135.

³ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 121.

⁴ Saitta, I, 113, n97.

two works (along with Georges Weill's more general survey) do suggest the diverse factors that molded the opposition to the Orleanist Regime and that worked, independently of Buonarroti and his circle, to raise again the standard of the First Republic.⁵

For those who were coming of age during the Restoration and the July Monarchy, intimate family memories of the First Republic, which had been largely submerged during twenty years of opprobrium followed by neglect, acquired a new dynamic and revolutionary significance. The interaction between the Old Guard of the First Republic and the new generation, that was set off by the return of the Bourbons, gave rise to an ecumenical "religion of the Revolution"⁶ which embraced, in a tricolored patriotism, the entire twenty-five year epic of war and revolution. When the white flag and Charles X gave way, in 1830, to the Tricolour and the son of Philippe Egalité—who failed to fulfill the role expected of a hero of Jemappes—this interaction gained momentum. The tradition was reformulated in terms of a more sectarian faith, centered on a Republic that had been both virtuous and victorious, charged with the new currents of democratic mysticism, Christian socialism, and romantic historicism.⁷

The importance of recognizing this background when considering the final phase of Buonarroti's career can scarcely be overstressed. It has been fully recognized by Signor Galante Garrone who has tried, on several occasions, to alert other scholars to the dangers of attributing to a single individual responsibility for the product of a complex interaction between two generations. That these warnings have been often ignored is illustrated by a frequently cited and much praised article concerning Buonarroti's relations with a group of French artists after his return to Paris.⁸ In tracing

⁵ Tchernoff, *Le Parti Républicain sous la Monarchie de Juillet*, *passim*, and Weill, *Parti Républicain*, *passim*.

⁶ This phrase is Faguet's. See Emile Faguet, *Politiques et Moralistes du Dix-Neuvième Siècle* (Paris, n.d.), I, 257-258 for a good description of the phenomenon.

⁷ This has been described in my previously cited doctoral dissertation pp. 282-357.

⁸ Madeleine Rousseau, "Filippo Buonarroti et les Artistes Françaises," *Revue des Etudes Italiennes* (1938), III, 159-169.

his indirect involvement in the "Société Libre des Arts" through his close friendship with Jeanron, Madeleine Rousseau has revealed an unknown facet of Buonarroti's career which is of considerable interest not only to his biographers but to art historians as well. She shows Buonarroti characteristically trying to enlist all available talents in the service of his cause, trying to make of the artist a servant of the "people" and of the Republic. She also draws attention to some of the more indirect consequences of his friendship with the man who was later, as director of the National Museums during the Second Republic, to introduce such painters as Daumier, Millet, and Theodore Rousseau to the French public. Some of these possible consequences are certainly intriguing. For example, Daumier's close friendship with Jeanron; the connection between the firm which employed Daumier (Aubert and Philipon) and the organization which Buonarroti attempted to control (the Société des Droits de l'Homme); together with the influence of Philipon on the radical content of Daumier's famous political lithographs of 1830-1835 seem to form a pattern which is relevant to the problem of evaluating Buonarroti's achievements as a propagandist and which is in itself of sufficient interest to warrant a careful investigation.

Instead of such a careful investigation, however, the article merely lumps Daumier's pertinent letter to Jeanron from Sainte-Pélagie in 1832 with such extraneous matters as Delacroix's romantic rendering of "Liberty Leading the People" (painted before Buonarroti was established in France), with David d'Angers' neo-classic profile of Buonarroti, and even with Millet's sentimental and Courbet's realistic renderings of "popular" themes (painted long after Buonarroti's death) in a manner that extends Buonarroti's contribution to nineteenth-century French art far beyond the bounds of probability. The implication that, by casual conversations with a group of friendly artists, a single layman (even a descendant of Michelangelo's brother) could contribute in any way to their various adaptations of the conflicting canons of neoclassicism, romanticism, and realism seems patently absurd. The suggestion that Buonarroti allied himself with the "aesthetic innovators" is startling and cer-

tainly needs further substantiation. If true, it would be the only area where Buonarroti departed from the "jacobin youth of the Restoration and the July Monarchy" who "violently rejected . . . romanticism" and who, as faithful pupils of Jacques Louis David, "occupied the citadel of conservatism."⁹ The factor of Buonarroti's personal charm, his ability to make friends even with those who disliked his cause, has probably been overlooked in this instance and a misleading significance attached to his association with a group of gregarious artists who represented a variety of differing styles.

Apart from the somewhat irrelevant matter of style, even the more plausible suggestion concerning subject matter is misleading. In the light of the literary and aesthetic currents of the era, it seems more than likely that all of the major artists who lent their considerable talents to the opposition to the Orleanist regime would have chosen to render the same themes with the same conviction had they never heard of a Société Libre des Arts, had Jeanron never encountered Buonarroti, had the latter never existed at all. A glance at the poetry, the novels, and indeed all of the popular literature of the era, would suffice to show how widely their convictions were shared. Above all, the article fails to note the significance of the fact that Buonarroti was only one of the countless survivors portrayed by David d'Angers who went, indeed, on pilgrimages from one symbolic bedside to another, interrogating his subjects as he sketched—thus piling up a veritable storehouse of oral legend which was to find its way into the popular histories of the period.

To understand the *œuvre* of this iconographer of the tradition of 1793 one must look not to his sessions with Buonarroti but to David d'Angers' father who was a volunteer of '92 and to his father-in-law who was an ex-conventionnel.¹⁰ To appreciate the bas-relief this sculptor was commissioned to execute for the pediment

⁹ Henri Focillon, "L'Art et la Révolution," *La Révolution de 1789 et la Pensée Moderne* (Paris, 1940), p. 41.

¹⁰ Henry Jouin, *David d'Angers: Sa Vie, Son Oeuvre, Ses Ecrits et Ses Contemporains* (Paris, 1878), I, 8-11, 130, 169-170, 322, 379-380.

to the Pantheon during the 1830's, one must also look beyond the Buonarrotian orbit to the sources from which the republican movement as a whole drew its inspiration. The republican leader, Armand Marrast, who proclaimed in 1838 that the Pantheon must be for the Republic what Westminster Abbey was for the Church of England, and who insisted that "the people" must, like the priests, also have "their cult, their rites, their institutions for all the stages of their existence; it is to humanity, to the nation that man belongs from the cradle to the tomb,"¹¹ was not a familiar figure in the radical circles frequented by Buonarroti but rather the target of attack from those circles.

Had Buonarroti died in 1825 as a sixty-two-year-old exile in Brussels before his encounter with Charles Teste and Voyer d'Argenson, before his "history" of the Babeuf Conspiracy had been written, and before his personal return to Paris, young French republicans would still have found similar guidance from experienced leaders near at hand. Thanks to the proliferation of oral and written material focused on the First Republic, Robespierre, Saint-Just, Couthon, Marat, and the rest of the dead, were almost as alive in the France of the 1830's as those of their contemporaries who survived. Most of the new generation were sons or grandsons of the Revolution in the literal as well as in the figurative sense of that term. Their initiation into the cult of the First Republic was much more the product of the unconscious collaboration of separate family units than it was the result of any deliberately organized campaign. And it was partly because Buonarroti shared the hero-worship of his younger contemporaries that he inspired it about his own person.

For it is generally recognized that he was regarded, during his last seven years in Paris, "as the inheritor of the ideas of the great revolutionary epoch, as the apostle who possessed the true democratic tradition; as the high-priest of a proscribed religion who guarded, almost alone and in a mysterious refuge, the sacred fire

¹¹ Armand Marrast, "Les Funérailles Révolutionnaires," *Paris Révolutionnaire*, ed. by G. Cavaignac (Paris, 1938), III, 222.

of equality,"¹² by men like Auguste Blanqui, Louis Blanc, Etienne Cabet, Ulysse Trélat, Albert Laponneraye, Achille Roche, Hauréau, Caunes, Lebon, and Vignerte; that is to say, by the more energetic and active representatives of the radical wing of the republican opposition to the Orleanist Regime.

The reverence he inspired, however, was not passively dissipated on a living monument to another age; to the contrary, it was actively exploited by a professional conspirator engaged in winning new recruits for his cause. When all due consideration has been given the limited role of a single individual in shaping a national tradition, there is now, thanks to recent research, ample evidence that Buonarroti's return to Paris was an event of some historic consequence and that historians have too frequently overlooked the significance of his presence in Orleanist France, even when they were being confronted, in various areas, with traces of his work.

Both before and after the repression of 1835, Buonarroti's shadow hovered over both the secret and the semilegal republican societies of Orleanist France. "It is difficult to state exactly when the remnants of the 'Charbonnerie Française' were reorganized by Buonarroti, first as 'Charbonnerie réformée' and then as 'Charbonnerie démocratique universelle.'" It may have been before the July Revolution. In any case by 1832 the organization was sufficiently active to draw provincial republicans like the Lyonnaise leader Mathieu (d'Epinal) as well as Parisian republicans like Guinard and Godefroy Cavaignac into the Buonarrotian orbit of conspiracy.¹³ After 1835, his impact was to be felt in the celebrated societies "des Familles" and "des Saisons." Dr. Lehning specifically excludes the "underground organizations connected with the names of Blanqui and Barbès which sprang up after 1835" from the Buonarrotian orbit. He regards them as revolutionary minority movements which aimed at an immediate seizure of power, and in his opinion they thus fall outside Buonarroti's gradualist conspiratorial schemes.¹⁴

¹² Robiquet, *Buonarroti et la Secte des Egaux*, p. 187. This citation turns up in just about every secondary work that mentions Buonarroti's presence in Orleanist France.

¹³ See Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 132, 133, 135. ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

But these organizations did not just "spring up," they were carefully organized along hierarchical lines, and with sufficient secrecy so that the uprising of 1839 took the authorities by surprise. Buonarroti had died before this uprising so that it is impossible to say whether or not he would have considered it ill-timed as he did the Lyonnaise insurrection of 1834.¹⁵ But although it is clear that he had shifted during the Restoration from the goal of an immediate insurrection to the notion of gradual erosion, it is also evident that, particularly after the July Revolution, his international schemes hinged upon an eventual Parisian uprising.

For, after 1830, Buonarroti's "gradualism" came more and more to characterize only the most secret and most "utopian" aspects of his conspiratorial goal. That portion of his program which had not been realized four decades before, during the First Republic, and which still was "misunderstood" and resisted by a large portion of humanity tended to be indefinitely postponed. At the same time he bent his energies as a propagandist and agitator working behind the scenes in Paris, toward the nongradualist goal of duplicating the insurrection of August 10, 1792, of establishing a Second Republic and providing the all-important signal from the "city of light." The insurrection of May 12, 1839, organised under the auspices of the Société des Saisons, did not fall entirely outside the Buonarrotian orbit. Among the members of the provisional government that was to be set up, appear the names of Laponneraye and Voyer d'Argenson, alongside those of Blanqui, Barbès, and Martin Bernard.¹⁶

It is also difficult to agree with Dr. Lehning's statement that Buonarroti "stood outside all controversy in the republican camp," which seems to contradict his observation, a few sentences later, that "Buonarroti took an active part in the political propaganda and in framing the policy of the revolutionary wing of the republican opposition to the Orleans Monarchy."¹⁷ There can be no dis-

¹⁵ Weill, "Philippe Buonarroti," *Revue Historique*, LXXVI, 272.

¹⁶ Weill, *Parti Républicain*, p. 132, n2.

¹⁷ Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 140.

agreement with this latter statement, at any rate. For although Buonarroti played the role of a "silent partner," his closest associates were prominent members of every important legal or semi-legal republican organization during the years of open association that followed the July Revolution. Although Perreux may ignore Buonarroti, his entire work is devoted to organizations like the Association pour la Liberté de la Presse, the Association pour L'Instruction Gratuite du Peuple, and the Société des Amis du Peuple. It was this latter organization that became involved in Belgian affairs in 1830, largely due to the efforts of Buonarroti and Charles Teste.¹⁸ Dr. Lehning, himself, offers evidence that Buonarroti sent an envoy to this organization in the same year with the mission of keeping it in line with his other societies.¹⁹ The bulk of Perreux's work is devoted to the most celebrated offspring of the Amis du Peuple, to the Société des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen—that "republic in action which was creating and organizing itself"²⁰—which named two of its 163 Parisian sections "Buonarroti" and many others—such as "Rousseau," "Phocion," "Incorruptible," "Amis de la Vertu," "Abolition de la Propriété Mal Acquise,"—after the men and causes that he most cherished.²¹ Every one of these organizations invariably contained on the roster of its directors the names of either one of Buonarroti's closest associates—Charles Teste or Voyer d'Argenson.

As is so often the case in dealing with French history of this period, recent "discoveries" simply revive contemporary testimony. Those of his contemporaries who were in a position to know, who had access to "inside information" that subsequent historians tended to overlook, were well aware of Buonarroti's important role. Thus Victor Bouton, the author of *Profils Révolutionnaires par un Crayon Rouge* (1848-49), and Henry Bonnais, d'Argenson's secretary whose

¹⁸ See Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 115-117, and Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 144-149.

¹⁹ Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 134.

²⁰ Perreux, *Propagande Républicaine*, p. 68.

²¹ See Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 212-213, and Weill, *Parti Républicain*, p. 98, n2 for relevant titles of sections.

funeral oration is an important source for knowledge of the intimacy between Buonarroti and his employer, agreed with Louis Blanc: "Nearly unnoticed on the political scene, nevertheless in the depth of his obscurity, he [Buonarroti] held power over generous minds, moved many secret springs, maintained constant relations with the democrats abroad and, seconded by Voyer d'Argenson and Charles Teste, held the reins of propagandism so as to accelerate or restrain its movements."²²

The power which Buonarroti was able to exert over certain "generous minds" seemed to be, in fact, almost unlimited. The recent publication of excerpts from the memoirs of Jean Jacques Delorme (1778-1856)—a provincial republican, who had been a Mason during the Empire and a Carbonarist during the Restoration—provides ample evidence of the validity of Louis Blanc's observation.²³ Delorme first encountered the "venerable old man" who was to become his spiritual father when he went to Paris in 1831 to be initiated into the Charbonnerie Reformée in the presence of Buonarroti, Voyer d'Argenson, and Charles Teste. After his return to his home town of Saint-Aignan, he set to work creating numerous "democratic committees" in the department of Loir-et-Cher, operating under "oral and secret instructions from the great center" in Paris. For the following six years, he carried on an extensive correspondence with Buonarroti. These letters show how the latter did, in this instance, at least, "hold the reins" of radical propaganda. Delorme figured in this correspondence as a loyal, hard-working "party man," incapable of thinking or acting on his own initiative, aware of his inferior position as "a poor patriot from the provinces," seeking approval and reassurance from his famous mentor. The extent of Delorme's dependence and the extravagant, emotional tone of his letters seem remarkable, when one notes that the writer was not an adolescent, but a fifty-six year old man:

²² Louis Blanc, *Histoire des Dix Ans* (Paris, n.d.), IV, 184, cited in Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 140. See also p. 135, n3 and Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 123-124, 274 on Bouton and Bonnais.

²³ R. Bouis, "Filippo Buonarroti nei Ricordi di un democratico Francese," *Movimento Operaio* (1955), VII, 887-918.

"There will be eternal fidelity between us; since your apparition upon this earth, your devotion to humanity has been unlimited; talents, fortune, rest, existence, you have sacrificed them all; if since my birth, I have not equalled you, the fault lies in circumstances and my feeble means; but I have nothing to reproach myself for, my private life and my public life are without stain, like you, I will sacrifice until I draw my last breath, for a single idol, sacred eternal humanity."²⁴

Judging by his frequent responses, Buonarroti was not in the least disconcerted by Delorme's obsequious effusions. To the contrary, he found the role of infallible oracle a congenial one and delivered himself of a number of opinions covering such diverse matters as scientific conferences (he condemned the vanity and aristocratic pretensions of the pedants who attended them); the journals of his day (the *National* was tainted with Girondism, the *Tribune* with Bonapartism); youth in general (energetic and pure, it needed only to be preserved from corruption); and violence (dilatatory methods were "more to be feared than prompt and violent measures" for the latter often proved invigorating, whereas passivity in the face of corruption led only to despair).²⁵ When the "rays of wisdom which shone in the spirit of my divine friend from Paris" were extinguished by Buonarroti's death, Delorme experienced a "profound anxiety." His sense of desertion found an outlet in frantic appeals to Voyer d'Argenson and Charles Teste—appeals that were ignored until finally in 1842 he was invited by Teste to Paris and found a certain consolation in making a pilgrimage to Buonarroti's grave.

From this correspondence, it is evident that, although he respected them, Delorme was unable to cast either d'Argenson or Teste in the role played for him by the man he called "papa Buonarroti." His letters reveal the direct influence exerted by the veteran conspirator over a provincial party worker. They provide a specific

²⁴ Delorme, Letter to Buonarroti, June 5, 1834, in *Movimento Operaio*, VII, 904.

²⁵ These reflections on violence, ending with a citation from Rousseau: "sublime reason can be supported only by the vigor of a soul capable of great passions," are contained in a letter Buonarroti wrote to Delorme toward the end of 1834—after the Lyons uprising. See *Movimento Operaio*, VII, 906.

and localized instance of the way Buonarroti helped to shape the republican movement in France; although he held no official position in any of the republican societies of the day and consequently was to be assigned a marginal role by historians of the movement.

2. THE INDIVISIBLE TRIO: TESTE, D'ARGENSON, AND BUONARROTI

When I read this little manuscript more than six months ago I was struck by the way it so clearly developed the sentiments which I have carried in my heart since my most tender years; sentiments which I owe to the virtue of my father and to my long reflections on the misfortunes of humanity.

From Buonarroti's draft of Teste's speech
defending d'Argenson's *Boutade*. 1833

The exact character of Buonarroti's association with Teste and d'Argenson seems to be of critical importance in justly estimating the former's role in the republican movement. In view of the evidence presented by Signor Saitta, it is clear that from 1830 to 1837, the three men worked on their varied projects in active collaboration with each other; their intimacy was both personal and political. Signor Saitta assumes that Teste and d'Argenson belonged to the supreme command of the Monde. He treats them sometimes as Buonarroti's "alter egos" and sometimes as his chief lieutenants; at the most he regards them as useful collaborators with valuable contacts, never as independent initiators of policy. Indeed he uses Teste's *Projet de Constitution Républicaine et Déclaration des Principes Fondamentaux de la Société* (1833) and d'Argenson's *Boutade d'un Riche à Sentiments Populaires* (1833), along with every pamphlet, brochure, or manifesto issued under the auspices of the publisher, Auguste Mie, as evidence of Buonarroti's "party line." This procedure rests on his discovery of Buonarroti's handwriting on portions of the original manuscripts of the two manifestos, and also on his discovery of the close correlation (in wording as well as in general content) between parts of the codes of Buonarroti's secret societies and excerpts from variously sponsored articles of republican propaganda.²⁶ He has amassed sufficient evidence to

²⁶ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 161-162.

support his important conclusion that much of the propaganda of the left wing of the republican opposition during the early years of the July Monarchy was directed and controlled by the trio Teste-d'Argenson-Buonarroti and that the three men worked so closely together that at times they formed an indivisible unit.²⁷ On the other hand, his implicit assumption that Buonarroti always served as the head of this triple organism—that he was, in the last analysis, solely responsible for its output—needs further substantiation.

Although his biography has never been written and the details of his life (especially during the early years of the Restoration) are so obscure that recent scholars still confuse him with his brother Jean-Baptiste,²⁸ all the scanty evidence available suggests that Charles Antoine Teste (1782–1848) was a familiar although not a prominent figure in Parisian republican and socialist circles well before he encountered Buonarroti in 1828.²⁹ Thanks to Georges Weill, it is known that this former Bonapartist functionary had become the owner of a bookshop and publishing house familiarly called “la Petite Jacobinière” from 1824 to 1828, that he had written several pamphlets concerned with popular and adult education, and that he had tried but failed to be made the editor of the *Tribune*.³⁰ Signor Galante Garrone has drawn attention to his friendship with the early Saint-Simonists who had been involved in the original Charbonnerie (1821–23) and were engaged in founding the journal *Producteur* (1826–27);³¹ and to his important editorial contributions in the historiographical rehabilitation of Robespierre which have been mentioned previously.³² Everything seems to suggest that, had

²⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 140.

²⁸ This was Louis Philippe's future minister, whose conspiratorial intrigues as a French refugee in Belgium during the Restoration, have been described by Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 117n. Lehning, “Buonarroti and his Secret Societies,” *International Review of Social History*, I, 133 refers to Charles' flight to Belgium “after the Restoration” but probably has confused him with his brother.

²⁹ Robiquet's contention that Buonarroti had established an intimate liaison with Teste by 1825 (*Buonarroti et la Secte des Egaux*, p. 166) has been traced by Saitta to a misattribution of correspondence. Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 70.

³⁰ Weill, *Parti Républicain*, p. 34, n5; p. 19, n1.

³¹ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 34.

³² See p. 64, *supra*.

he never encountered Buonarroti in 1828, he would have pursued in France after 1830 a role similar to that which he did in fact pursue, as a leading member of all the various legal and semilegal organizations that opposed the Orleanist regime and as an organizer of adult education programs as well as of republican propaganda for the Parisian populace. Nonetheless, there is ample evidence that his encounter with Buonarroti significantly altered the direction of his activities both in terms of political action and ideological persuasion, and that it marked his initiation into the career of conspiracy.

From the correspondence which has been published, it is clear that Teste became a secret agent for Buonarroti's international organization; it was in this capacity that he became involved in the intrigues that accompanied the Belgian Revolution of 1830, that he later helped to organize the Charbonnerie Reformée and exerted a considerable influence on the secret societies of the day.³³ Dr. Lehning has discovered that previously, in 1822, Teste had been a member of the masonic order "Misraim," which may have been under the direction of the Haute Vente of the Charbonnerie, but there is no evidence of his having played a role in any conspiracy before he met Buonarroti.³⁴ Thus his encounter with Buonarroti probably marked the inauguration of his double life; beneath the surface of the continuation of the role he had previously played was the complicating element of his new allegiance to an organization which masked its existence.

There is also evidence that his association with Buonarroti altered his approach to domestic reform. For one thing he tended, after their encounter, to disassociate himself from his earlier alliance with the Saint-Simonists. As Signor Galante Garrone has suggested in a different connection, the diverse approaches to the revolutionary tradition, represented by Buonarroti, on one hand, and by the Saint-Simonists, on the other, found in Teste their symbolic point

³³ See correspondence between Buonarroti, Teste, and De Potter, in Saitta, *Buonarroti II*, 154-157. This matter has been thoroughly discussed by Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 115-127; 213-223.

³⁴ Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 133, 115.

of encounter and of subsequent divergence. Buonarroti's successful effort to convince Teste of the doctrinal error which he found inherent in Saint-Simonism is set forth in his interesting critique of a tract sent him by Teste. This critique provides an important example of Buonarroti's fundamentalist approach to the social currents of the nineteenth century:

Every development of our faculties is not necessarily progressive; and to see in this unlimited development the perfection of civilization seems to me to be an error...the perfect civilization is a reasonable order of love and fraternity that does not seem to me to be reconcilable with inalienable private property that can only be the fruit of egoism, the aid to vanity, and the source of envy, hatred, and war. A little industry, a great man has said, unites citizens, a lot of industry divides them and makes them unhappy and hostile. It is thus not in the unlimited development of industry and in the accumulation of individual wealth that one should locate the perfectibility of the social order. Happiness is more in the moderation of desires, the love of virtue, and the peace of a good conscience than in the multiplication of needs, the refinement of pleasures, and the satisfactions of truth. To expect men who are increasingly occupied with manufacture, commerce, and money, who care about dress, good living, fashions, and luxuries to be friends of virtue and to devote themselves to their country, is to expect streams to return to their source, fire not to melt wax, arsenic to be non-poisonous.³⁵

There was some good to be salvaged from the Saint-Simonists' program; their ideas on "general education, the abolition of heredity, the sanction of religion, and the reunion of the spiritual with the temporal" should be adopted. But one plank, woman's rights, should be approached with caution: "In order to render to women the complete exercise of their rights, it would be necessary, I think, to begin by entirely changing their education without which their prejudices, their coquetry, their vanity, and their subtlety would soon corrupt manners and customs and would overthrow the most wisely constructed public order."³⁶ From its context it seems clear that this somewhat priggish observation was made in all seriousness. Only when one recalls the less priggish role that Buonarroti

³⁵ Letter of Buonarroti to Teste, April 16, 1830, in Saitta, II, 143-144.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 142.

attempted to play in the sentimental education of Teresa Poggi does his stand on woman's rights assume an ironical aspect. Like most revolutionists, however, Buonarroti rarely practiced the art of self-analysis.

Along with his estrangement from the doctrines of the Saint-Simonists, went Teste's advocacy of a program and policy that reflected precisely the long-held views of his close friend. This is demonstrated by Teste's little known but important *Projet de Constitution Républicaine et Déclaration des Principes Fondamentaux de la Société*, which was published in 1833 and recently exhumed by Signor Saitta. It called for the establishment of a temporary despotism of Terror and Virtue under the leadership of the revolutionary *avant-garde* which, by certain original devices (including committees with the "power to temporarily suspend the rights of suffrage and the expression of political opinions on the part of all individuals who might try to mislead and corrupt the citizens and discredit the republican laws") would perpetuate its control of the more regular constitutional government that would follow. It also called for the abolition of all existing taxes except for tariffs and the imposition of a progressive income tax. The proceeds would be used "to ease the lot of the poor, and to give to all children an education properly adapted to their becoming virtuous citizens." Eventual acquisition by the Republic of control of all property rights was also envisioned along with the nationalization of industry and agriculture. The treatment of economic organization was brief and vague in contrast with the lengthy, detailed account of political institutions.³⁷

According to its author this project was not the "manifestation of the thought of a single person but the result of a collective work and the fruit of discussion among a group of friends." Nonetheless the work was specifically motivated by Teste's desire to elucidate the principles in which he believed. After 1830, he declared, "My name has been used in connection with almost all the manifestations that have had some force; however, they did not represent my thought as a whole; this has led me to completely formulate my

³⁷ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 159-160.

principles, which can be found frankly exposed in this publication.”³⁸ In view of this declaration and of the tenor of the publication in question, the discovery of corrections in Buonarroti’s handwriting on the original manuscript is superfluous; it is clear from the spirit as well as the letter of the work that Teste had become a whole-hearted convert to his friend’s faith: “He treated me as his son, I venerated him as a second father,” was Teste’s own description of his relationship with the veteran conspirator.³⁹

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that after they became acquainted, Teste tended to follow Buonarroti’s lead in most matters of importance and that in their relationship the initiative rested largely with the latter, whose historic stature would be considerably increased with greater recognition of this fact. The assumption of Buonarroti’s dominance, however, seems less secure where Voyer d’Argenson (1771–1842) is concerned. The relationship between the veteran conspirator and the wealthy seigneur who supported him during his last years seems to have been a reciprocal one based on a sharing of views which were not identical but which complemented each other. The relationship was certainly an intimate one; the exchange of opinions, protracted. According to a contemporary, it became routine for d’Argenson and Buonarroti to meet every day alone for a two-hour discussion, which even members of d’Argenson’s family were forbidden to disturb.⁴⁰ Until they met and became close personal friends, however, these two sexagenarians had led very different lives.

D’Argenson’s family background was even less plebeian than Buonarroti’s.⁴¹ Whereas the latter was descended from the Tuscan equivalent of a *noblesse de robe*, the former belonged to the *noblesse d’épée*—his father having been a lieutenant-general in the royal

³⁸ Saitta, I, 157n. See also p. 149.

³⁹ Teste, Letter to Prefect, February 9, 1839, cited in Prudhommeaux, *Icarie*, p. 62n.

⁴⁰ Dourville, *Vie de Voyer d’Argenson*, p. 14; cited in Prudhommeaux, *Icarie*, p. 61.

⁴¹ For the following biographical material see M. Prevost, “Argenson,” *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française—III—Antoine-Aubermesnil* (Paris, 1939), pp. 543–546, and G. Weill, “D’Argenson et la Question Sociale,” *International Review of Social History* (1939), IV, 161–169.

army. His grandfather, the Count, had served as Minister of War under Louis XV and his great uncle had been the celebrated Marquis who had served the same monarch as foreign minister. From 1789 to 1792, while Buonarroti was acting as a Jacobin administrator in Corsica, d'Argenson was serving as Lafayette's aide-de-camp. With the latter's emigration, he retired to his lands in Poitou where he lived the life of a country gentleman while supervising his major industrial property, the great ironworks near Oberbruch. He took no part in political affairs; despite his association with Lafayette, he was untouched by the Terror and continued to live in France throughout the Revolution. He grew fond of the widow of one of his best friends, the prince de Broglie, who had been less fortunate, and married her, thus becoming the step-father of the future minister of Louis Philippe. He was to remain on the best of terms with his step-son despite their political differences. In this alliance, as in his family background, and his agricultural and industrial concerns, his mode of life resembled that of a member of the English Whig aristocracy. He served briefly as a Napoleonic prefect in Antwerp but resigned after his defense of the Belgians against the French authorities—in particular his refusal to confiscate the property of the wealthy Mayor of Antwerp who was charged with corruption—had led to trouble with the authorities. It is difficult to imagine a pattern of life more diametrically opposed to the one that had been led by Buonarroti. The latter had, one remembers, also gotten into trouble with the authorities while serving abroad as an agent of the French government during an earlier period, but for precisely the opposite reason—because of illegally confiscating the lands of a Genoese aristocrat.

After 1815, d'Argenson's career continued to play an interesting counterpoint to that of his future friend. He became a deputy in the "Chambre Introuvable" of 1815 and courageously spoke out in that unfavorable atmosphere against the "massacre" of French Protestants in the South. During the subsequent early years of the Restoration, when Buonarroti was trying to spin his first web with the aid of the Sublimes Mâîtres Parfaits in Geneva, d'Argenson was acquiring a reputation as a member of the "liberal" opposition in

the Bourbon Chamber where he sat on the Left with Dupont (de L'Eure), Manuel, Puyraveau, de Corcelle, Koechlin and Lafayette. He was also helping to finance, along with Lafayette and Koechlin, a secret opposition group which, by 1821, became the Haute Vente of the Charbonnerie, that is to say he was a leader of the very organization with which members of Buonarroti's organization were specifically forbidden to communicate freely.⁴² Signor Saitta has suggested that shortly after the disintegration of the Charbonnerie in 1823, d'Argenson was drawn into the "Buonarrotian orbit" although he can find no evidence of any personal encounter before 1830. This hypothesis is mainly based on a letter d'Argenson wrote in 1824 to the *Courrier Français*, proclaiming a new doctrine—"the science of social justice . . . destined someday to teach to all mankind, without distinction of country or nation, how it should group itself, associate itself, divide among itself the gifts of nature and then govern itself within each society," which Signor Saitta depicts as a radical break from d'Argenson's previous position as a parliamentary liberal who advocated political reform and the introduction of the English Poor Law in France.⁴³

But even where there is evidence of personal intimacy, as well as of intellectual kinship, the question of ideological influence has to be approached with the utmost caution. And until this evidence appears, such speculation is unwarranted, providing an instance of the tendency of a dedicated biographer to overemphasize his subject. D'Argenson's reference to the Poor Law was made in 1814. Many things had happened since that time, including a speech in the Chamber of 1822 by his friend, Beauséjour, which referred to a nation of five hundred thousand Frenchmen who ate and thirty million Frenchmen who were eaten up. Moreover, only by taking this reference out of context can one attribute to it the significance given by Signor Saitta.⁴⁴ It was as the unfortunate consequence of the maintenance of a system of high agricultural tariffs which

⁴² See p. 46, *supra*.

⁴³ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 100, n58.

⁴⁴ It is given out of context, along with the quotation from d'Argenson's letter—also out of context—in Weill, *Parti Républicain*, p. 15, and this is the only source that Saitta relies on.

benefited only the land-owning class that d'Argenson referred to the possible introduction of a Poor Law in France.⁴⁵ And his attack on a high tariff policy in 1814 was significantly linked to his proclamation of a new social science in 1824.

It is quite possible, and even probable, that d'Argenson's letter of 1824 was simply a reflection of the contemporary ferment of ideas in France. It has a vague and portentous ring that evokes the tone of earlier pronouncements by another eccentric aristocrat—Claude Henri, Count de Saint-Simon. It is also possible, although less probable, that this letter was, as Signor Galante Garrone suggests, at the same time, a reflection of a personal revival of interest in the writings of d'Argenson's famous great-uncle who had been an admirer of Morelly and Rousseau.⁴⁶ But it is most improbable that this pronouncement can be attributed to d'Argenson's being drawn into the "Buonarrotian orbit." For one thing, his political collaboration with Lafayette (the arch-heretic from Buonarroti's point of view) continued. In 1826 the two liberal aristocrats founded the *Revue Américaine* the very title of which suggests its ideological distance from the "Buonarrotian orbit."⁴⁷ Moreover, when d'Argenson announced the advent of a "science of social justice" he was, in his own words (that are unaccountably omitted by both Signor Saitta and Signor Galante Garrone), referring to "that science of truth, of morality, and of eternal justice, . . . that religion, which is called upon to replace the mischievous inventions of the past. It is that of which the writings of Smith contain precious germs, cultivated and extended by our illustrious compatriot, Say."⁴⁸

Thus however much d'Argenson tended (like other Frenchmen of his day) to "mix theology with political economy or, as the proverb

⁴⁵ Weill, "D'Argenson et la Question Sociale," *International Review of Social History*, IV, 163.

⁴⁶ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 225-226.

⁴⁷ Prevost, "d'Argenson," *Dictionnaire*—III, p. 545. On Buonarroti's opposition to Lafayette and the *école américaine* see pp. 139-140 *infra*.

⁴⁸ Cited by Weill, "D'Argenson et la Question Sociale," p. 164 from *Discours et Opinions de Voyer d'Argenson* (Paris, 1845), II, 5. Saitta's omission can be accounted for by his reliance on Weill's survey (see n44 *supra*) but Galante Garrone's failure to mention Smith or Say is curious in view of his citation of the same source used by Weill in his article.

goes, God with prunes,"⁴⁹ his particular "abuse of religiosity" was in terms of that "Order of the Economists" which for Buonarroti represented the arch-heresy. His "new science" was based on the teachings of the very men that Buonarroti was, at the same time, attacking from his Brussels refuge as "writers who have made the prosperity of a nation to consist in the multiplicity of their wants, in the ever-augmenting diversity of their material enjoyment, in an immense industry, in an unlimited commerce and . . . in the restlessness and insatiable cupidity of the population."⁵⁰

Also at the same time that Buonarroti was attempting to revive, in his tribute to the revolutionary martyrs, the authentic passions of the partisan conflicts of the Great Revolution, d'Argenson was confiding to Foy his hopes that the new science would quench the flames of the old emotional controversy: "Thanks to the progress of the economic sciences, one can today approach all the questions of popular justice in terms of methodical arguments and a language that is moderated to the point of coldness, when during the assemblies at the beginning of the Revolution, these doctrines seemed to be the inseparable companions of hatred and passion."⁵¹ But his "methodical arguments" fell on deaf ears. His speeches were ignored by "an assembly that was only interested in purely political debates. D'Argenson ended by resigning as a deputy in 1829."

This resignation may have been personally rather than politically motivated. His wife had died in 1828 and he withdrew from business as well as political affairs at this time. But in any case, his concern with economic and social problems was received with greater sympathy in those radical circles which existed outside the Chamber. Like the founder of English utilitarianism, who also used *The Wealth of Nations* as a point of departure and had also thought the "scientific" approach presented a solution to social problems that the Revolutionary French Assemblies had treated with prejudices

⁴⁹ Proudhon, *La Voix du Peuple* (Dec. 13, 1849). Cited in P. Quentin-Bauchart, *La Crise Sociale de 1848* (Paris, n.d.), pp. 92-93.

⁵⁰ The "order of the economists" was "the Order of Egoism or the Aristocratic System." Buonarroti (Bronterre), pp. 9-10.

⁵¹ Cited in Weill, "D'Argenson et la Question Sociale," *International Review of Social History*, IV, 165.

and passion, d'Argenson gradually shifted from his alliance with the dynastic opposition to an affiliation with the republican cause. This shift cemented his friendship with Buonarroti. But, as was also the case with Bentham and the utilitarians, the question of regime had played a subordinate role in his approach to social reform; in marked contrast to Buonarroti's social vision, which was always focused on the abstract construct of a "Republic" that specifically excluded the abstract construct of an "economic man."

It seems more than likely that Buonarroti's influence did lead his new friend to identify his own social and economic ideas with those of the men of '93, with the economic legislation of the Terror, with Robespierre's amended *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, and that it contributed to d'Argenson's gradual assumption of a position which found him defending Robespierre and attacking slavery in the United States in the Chamber of 1834.⁵² In the light of the evidence (which includes Signor Saitta's discovery of corrections and alterations in Buonarroti's handwriting on the original manuscript; as well as his original draft of Teste's speech for the defence, in the trial that followed its publication) it also seems reasonable to agree that the famous *Boutade d'un Riche à Sentiments Populaires* (1833) "does not reflect merely friendship or a common ideological climate but direct political collaboration."⁵³ Still the editor of a manuscript may share in the responsibility for its final form without necessarily initiating all the views it contains. To claim, as does Signor Saitta, that the *Boutade* was "not so much the personal ideological manifestation of its authors as it was the external manifestation of that buonarrotian program whose propaganda they were directing"⁵⁴ is to ignore not only d'Argenson's specific avowal of authorship⁵⁵ but also his various writings and speeches during the period, from 1824 to 1830, before his active collaboration with

⁵² See account of session of Jan. 6, 1834 in *Discours et Opinions de Voyer d'Argenson, Précédés d'une Notice Biographique* (Paris, 1845), II, 400-415.

⁵³ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 157, n76. See also II, Appendix D, 160-168, for full text of both the *Boutade* and Teste's speech with notes concerning alterations and handwriting.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 161-162.

⁵⁵ See Weill, "D'Argenson et la Question Sociale," *International Review of Social History*, IV, 167.

Buonarroti had commenced, that are similar in content to the *Boutade*.⁵⁶ Here is an instance where the treatment of the trio Teste-Buonarroti-d'Argenson as an indivisible unit subtly extends Buonarroti's influence beyond its actual confines and thus distorts its historic significance.

One may agree with Signor Saitta that the separate activities of Teste, Buonarroti, and d'Argenson should be reappraised as co-ordinated efforts that formed part of a general propaganda scheme. One must nonetheless question his assumption that Buonarroti's views always prevailed over those of his collaborators and that the adjective "buonarrotian" can appropriately be applied to the entire content of their collective work. There is no reason to assume that the interaction between Buonarroti and d'Argenson was a one way affair. To the contrary, as Signor Galante Garrone has said: "Whatever suggestions or stimuli had come from Buonarroti, it does not seem possible to say that . . . [d'Argenson's] own social doctrines had been cast in the Buonarrotian mould, as to the contrary one may say of the egalitarianism of Teste, whose intellectual personality was very much less distinctive and original than Voyer d'Argenson's. One may even suppose, with some basis, that Buonarroti himself felt (naturally after 1830) the theoretical influence of his new friend, at more than one point, especially in economic matters where d'Argenson was more used to doing battle."⁵⁷

On the other hand, if a large share of credit for the content of the *Boutade* must go to d'Argenson, it seems likely that Buonarroti was responsible for its deliberately provocative tone. Never before had d'Argenson's writings provoked a political trial. The fact is that d'Argenson's position *was* fundamentally altered after his encounter with Buonarroti. But he did not, as is frequently stated, become less occupied with political reform and more concerned with social and economic reform. He became less of a reformer altogether and more of a revolutionist. The former country gentleman, the free trader and defender of religious minorities, the utilitarian radical and social reformer emerged, after his encounter with

⁵⁶ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 228.

⁵⁷ Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 230-231.

Buonarroti, as a political agitator and pamphleteer, who identified his cause with those who were raising barricades. That this role was somewhat out of character is suggested not only by his previous record but also by the fact that when Buonarroti died, d'Argenson again abandoned politics to retire to the rural life of the country gentleman until he died in 1842.

It was not in the awakening of d'Argenson's social conscience but rather in the ending of his long association with Lafayette that one may find the symbolic token of his friendship with Buonarroti. On its cover, the *Boutade* had contained a notice of a forthcoming work, which also appeared in 1833 under the auspices of August Mie, entitled *Vie Politique de Marie Paul Jean Roch Yves Gilbert Moité, marquis de Lafayette né à Chavagnac (Haute-Loire) le 6 septembre 1757* by E. Gigault. This violent polemic was signed by Gigault but probably written by Buonarroti and Teste. In both tone and content, it was perhaps the most characteristic product of Buonarroti's organization and will be referred to later. Here one should note only that it represented a scathing, bitter attack on the "hero of two worlds" whom d'Argenson had long ago served as aide-de-camp and with whom he had worked closely during the Restoration. "Lafayette was the adversary of the most numerous class, the director of the resistance to the well being of the masses: he sustained civil war; he was factious in fighting for the privileged: we accuse him with proofs in hand; who can blame us? The egoists, the monopolizers of social advantage, the enemies of the people . . ."⁵⁸

It seems to me quite in character that Buonarroti's organization should have singled out for attack as an "enemy of the people" not some factory owner or banker of the 1830's nor even a contemporary royal minister (like d'Argenson's step-son, the Vicomte de Broglie) but rather an elderly survivor of another eighteenth-century faith, a man who had played a role in almost all the "false" revolutions but who had been in disgrace during the only "true" one.

⁵⁸ See Etienne Gigault, *Vie Politique de Marie Roch Yves Gilbert Moité, Marquis de Lafayette* . . . Brochure (Paris, 1833), and Cabet's opinion on its real authors, cited in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 162-164. See also Prudhommeaux, *Icarie*, pp. 65-67.

3. AT THE BARRICADES, IN THE NAME OF "THE PEOPLE"

I do not doubt that there are still germs of true patriotism in the working people.

Buonarroti, 1829

From the foregoing it seems apparent that Louis Blanc's observation was a shrewd one. After his return to France, Buonarroti's professional abilities and experience were fully utilized in the area which today is known as the department of agitation and propaganda. In this field, his dedication and conscious purpose enabled him to divert or channel the energies of those who were less purposeful and less single-minded. While remaining behind the scenes and directing the work of his better known colleagues, he succeeded, as Signor Saitta has shown, in building up an efficient machine which was to leave a lasting mark on radical polemical literature. The extreme verbal violence, the forcing of issues and the courting of censorship and repression, the exploitation of political trials for publicity purposes, the recruitment of respectable names like Levasseur and d'Argenson along with the defamation of opponents bearing equally respectable names partly on the grounds of class origins—all this would become increasingly familiar during the century that followed the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*.

In order to appreciate Buonarroti's mastery of the technique of "agit-prop" one should recall his long training in this field, going back to the days when he had served as an agent of the revolutionary government in Corsica. One should note that his attack on Paoli was similar both in content and tone to his attack on Lafayette forty years later. In the 1790's he had been genuinely horrified at the "vices and falsity of the gilded class" and at their "liberal phrases" which lulled the "people" to sleep. In the 1830's he still approached social upheaval from the viewpoint of a political moralist who was suspicious of those who practiced the "dismal science." Until he died, his grasp of economic problems remained uncertain; his politically amateurish friend Voyer d'Argenson had much to teach him in this area. Yet Buonarroti's contribution to the radical movement in France has been almost always identified with the

program of those social reformers who were primarily concerned with the *economic* bases of social reorganization.

Signor Galante Garrone, for example, correctly objects to Mr. Bernstein's observation that Buonarroti's advocacy of a progressive income tax had a political objective, namely the creation of a "popular front" of workers and petty bourgeois, on the grounds of an "excessive modernization" of early nineteenth-century opinion.⁵⁹ Signor Saitta quite rightly uses even stronger words to characterize "this antihistorical attempt to introduce a problem that lay completely beyond Buonarroti's mental horizon."⁶⁰ Both authorities, however, fail to emphasize sufficiently that Buonarroti's fiscal policy did have an ultimate *political* or ethical objective—that of creating a more virtuous citizenry. "Never was love of country a dominant passion among the rich."⁶¹ A typical buonarrotian brochure of 1833 specifically proposed the tax as a means of restoring to all Frenchmen a sense of civic virtue.⁶²

Signor Saitta has suggested that as Buonarroti became involved in the open opposition to the Orleanist regime, in the legal agitation expressed in petitions to the Chamber, the organization of adult education, the open campaign for a free press, for universal suffrage, for a graduated income tax, he was forced out of the insulated conspiratorial milieu and brought into a fruitful contact with the "concrete world of the workers." Through this contact with the "advance force of the French proletariat and via the neo-Babouvists and above all Blanqui," "Buonarrotismo" helped to lay the "foundation for the first French socialist party."⁶³ Certainly the propaganda circulated by the *Société des Droits de l'Homme* developed a momentum of its own that was to have important consequences in a future that contained the class warfare of the June Days of 1848. A contemporary observer noted that its members were "the first

⁵⁹ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 305n.

⁶⁰ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 126 n8.

⁶¹ See Buonarroti's notes on a progressive tax, in Saitta, II, Appendix D, p. 151.

⁶² "Le Citoyen" Vielbanc, *L'Homme du Peuple Devant Une Cour D'Assise*, pamphlet (Paris, 1833), p. 14.

⁶³ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 137-138.

to propagate communist doctrines among the working class." He also noted, however, that they were propagated "principally as a means of recruitment,"⁶⁴ that is, to win support for the political cause of republicanism. To pave the way for the end of the monarchy by a campaign of open agitation, similar to the campaign undertaken by Robespierre during the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies, was clearly Buonarroti's main concern.⁶⁵ To this end, an alliance with the new sans-culottes was essential; the various consequences which resulted from this alliance were, perhaps, no more foreseen by Buonarroti than the legend based on the earlier alliance had been foreseen by Robespierre.

This is not to say that his vision was identical with that of the men of '93. Robespierre's famous discourse of April 24, 1793—that included the amended *Declaration of the Rights of Man* and that had attacked the original Declaration of 1789 as "a declaration of the rights of rich men, profiteers, speculators, and tyrants"—had also specifically guaranteed private property, had insisted that "l'égalité des biens est un chimère" and had called upon the legislator "not to redistribute private property but to insist on the moral duties of property owners."⁶⁶ Buonarroti, to the contrary, argued that there was nothing chimerical about a communist society: "A kind of social existence that has been practiced by the Essenes, by the Spartans, by the early Christians, in Paraguay and in Peru and in most of the Catholic religious communities is not an impossible thing" and was convinced that all the efforts and all the thoughts of a man of good will must be directed to "establishing on earth *cette douce communauté*."⁶⁷

Many historians can be found who agree with Proudhon that the revolutionary government of 1793 did "nothing, absolutely nothing" to undermine respect for private property.

⁶⁴ d'Alton-Shée, *Mes Mémoires (1826-1848)* (Paris, 1869). Cited in Weill, *Parti Républicain*, p. 124, n2.

⁶⁵ See citation from Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 121, on p. 94, *infra*.

⁶⁶ Cited, J. M. Thompson, *Robespierre* (New York, 1936), II, 40.

⁶⁷ See "Scritto Buonarrotiano sulla Comunione dei Beni e dei Lavori," Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 140.

There were nobles who were expropriated, ruined...; but for a political cause not for an economic reason. They were prosecuted as nobles, as aristocrats, as émigrés, etc., never as property owners. Requisitions were established following the principle of a progressive tax...but those who were responsible for imposing these measures declared that they were temporary and exceptional; in no way were they systematic.

...The dictatorship was established in '93 not against property but for property. It was so clearly property that the Convention and the Jacobins intended to defend, that the socialists of the epoch, called the *enragés*, were sent to the guillotine and that the terror on social questions was greater in 1792-1794 than during the counter revolution.⁶⁸

For Buonarroti, however, and for many Frenchmen during the Orleanist regime, it seemed clear that Robespierre had no intention of founding his Republic upon any institutions which crystallized the motive of rational self-interest. "He understood that the fate of the Republic would always be compromised by this debris of institutions from the days of barbarism, egoism, and slavery. If he respected property it was with death in his heart and it was only in the presence of the coalition of individual interests, of filthy spirits, that he held himself back..."⁶⁹

Until he died, Buonarroti believed that his vision was identical with Robespierre's, that the fate of the latter had indeed shown how necessary it was to hold back in order not "to compromise with careless zeal a cause that was so sacred and so misunderstood."⁷⁰

... A reform such as that conceived by Robespierre and his friends, is so contrary to the commonly held ideas of a social order that it is not surprising that, aside from opponents who felt their interests were threatened, there were men who opposed it because they misunderstood it and could not reconcile it with their... old habits. ... If one can believe the revelations of some of Robespierre's persecutors, the manifest inten-

⁶⁸ P. J. Proudhon, *Les Confessions d'un Révolutionnaire* (3rd Ed., Paris, 1851), p. 320.

⁶⁹ "De l'égalité des Droits Politiques..." *La Fraternité de 1845-Organisme du Communisme* (Sept. 1846) in *Murailles Révolutionnaires*, ed. A. Delvaux, (Paris, 1851), I, 175.

⁷⁰ "Scritto Buonarroti sulla Comunione..." Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 140.

tion of modifying the laws on property helped to swell the ranks of his enemies.⁷¹

Buonarroti's conception of this sacred cause, as his reference to the Essenes and Spartans suggest, does not seem to have been modified by his contact with "the concrete world" of the nineteenth-century workers. And Signor Saitta notes that his criticism of social institutions—although it involved the problem of consumption and distribution—never included the problem of production.⁷² But to use such terms is once again to introduce the "economic man" into a frame of reference which was based on the exclusion of just such an egoistical creature. In any case, Buonarroti's approach to the economic problems of his last days remained characteristically vague and ambiguous, tending toward a "reactionary" condemnation of industrial progress as an unmitigated evil and toward that "safe socialism" which consisted largely of denouncing the rich while not really trusting the workers.

Of course Buonarroti's extrapolation of the various economic measures taken by the revolutionary government of 1793-94 into the future should not be ignored. For his conviction that all right thinking men "will see in the confiscation of the goods of condemned counter-revolutionaries, not a fiscal measure but the vast plan of a reformer"⁷³ was to bear fruit for the century to come. Actually, Signor Galante Garrone's insistence that

while Buonarroti maintained, also in the last years of his life, his old ascetic-rational program . . . at the same time he felt, albeit in a confused manner, the value of coalition and association which emerged spontaneously from the working classes and intuited in some way its revolutionary implications and suggested that the republicans of the *Rights of Man* link their force to the working class movement. Buonarroti's ideological world cannot be reduced to the rousseauian doctrinal premise: it was nourished and enriched by the social and political experience of his long life.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Buonarroti, *Observations Sur Maximilien Robespierre* (1837), in Saitta, II, 272-273.

⁷² Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 135.

⁷³ Buonarroti, *Conspiration Pour l'Egalité dite de Babeuf, etc.* (Brussels, 1828), I, 40.

⁷⁴ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 294.

suggests a failure to recognize that Buonarroti's "old ascetic-rational program" was never (after 1793) capable of being reduced simply to a "rousseauian doctrinal premise;" it always involved his social and political experience during the Revolution. Even his plan for a graduated income tax had been derived from the legislation of the Convention.⁷⁵ Unless one grasps the extent to which the pre-Thermidorian Republic represented a fixed star for Buonarroti throughout his long life, one will continuously distort the direction of his thought and may even be led to conclude that one should not make too much of "the distinction between the eighteenth-century egalitarianism of Buonarroti and the proletarian communism of the nineteenth century."⁷⁶ Yet to blur this distinction is to falsify the particular character of Buonarroti's influence.

The blurring of this distinction results, for example, in compounding the confusion that already surrounds the celebrated schism of 1833 in the *Société des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen*—an organization which (according to Signor Saitta) provided Buonarroti with his major field of action in the nonconspiratorial realm and which (according to an Orleanist prosecutor) propagated the cult of 1793, not as "the product of some deleterious passions but as the systematic work of a directing committee."⁷⁷ The contest for power between two rival committees, one led by Raspail, the other by Lebon, was the subject of much contemporary comment; and accordingly, has been noted by almost all the historians of the republican movement, who rarely mention Buonarroti in connection with it. Yet Signor Saitta has shown that the quarrel was probably precipitated by Buonarroti's attempt to exploit this key organization for his own ends and that, after a temporary setback, he was eventually successful. He undoubtedly played a part in offsetting the temporary victory of the independent Comité Raspail by the formation of a rival organization, the *Société des Droits du Peuple*, whose manifestos, which appeared under the imprint of the

⁷⁵ See Buonarroti's Notes on Income Tax in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 150.

⁷⁶ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 250.

⁷⁷ *Procès des Vingt-Sept ou de la Société des Droits de l'Homme* . . . Publication du *Populaire* No. 16 (Paris, 1834), p. 5.

ubiquitous A. Mie, characteristically denounced the members of the parent society as fayettists and bonapartists.

By the end of 1833, Buonarroti obtained effective control through new elections which placed d'Argenson, Lebon, Kersausie, and Vignerte on the renovated central committee of the original society. Apart from the fact that this sort of jockeying for power within a radical organization, would again set a pattern for the future and that Buonarroti's tactical experience had again paid off, the significance of this victory was, in my opinion, revealed in the defeated Raspail's contention "it is not with the past that one makes the future but with the present" and in the program issued by the renovated central committee which began by declaring themselves "heirs of the mission undertaken by the genius of the National Convention" and concluded with the reproduction of Robespierre's *Declaration of Rights*.⁷⁸

In attempting to interpret this split within republican ranks, however, most authorities have wandered far afield by unfortunately perpetuating the contemporary analysis of Pierre Leroux who, like most of his generation, was captivated by the imprecise partisan vocabulary of the Great Revolution. Leroux had reviewed the internecine affair in terms of three rival sects: the "queue de Danton," led by Marrast and the men of the *National*, representing Liberty; the "queue de Robespierre," led by Lebon and Vignerte (Buonarroti's ostensible accomplices) representing Equality; and a middle group, led by Godefroy Cavaignac, representing Fraternity.⁷⁹ Cavaignac's attempt to reconcile the warring factions so incensed the dissident extremists that he was condemned to death by several sections and had to spend a month in hiding until the sentence was revoked.⁸⁰ It is clear enough that the schism dealt a blow to the cause of "fraternity." It is far from clear that it developed from a conflict between "liberty" and "equality." The schism was, in fact, provoked by an irreconcilable divergence of opinion over a

⁷⁸ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 153-156.

⁷⁹ See Perreux, *Propagande Républicaine*, p. 260; G. Sencier, *Le Babouvisme après Babeuf* (Paris, 1912), p. 52; Weill, *Parti Républicain*, pp. 88-89.

⁸⁰ Weill, *Parti Républicain*, p. 89.

proposal to incite a riot on June 5, 1833 and to vote as an order of the day "The cypresses of liberty must be watered with blood and not with tears." Georges Weill, who emphasizes this incident, explains the schism mainly in terms of a basic tactical argument between the advocates of pacific propaganda led by Raspail and the advocates of active insurrection led by Lebon and Vignerte. If this interpretation is accepted, and there is ample evidence to support it, it is difficult to understand why Buonarroti—who was, the following year, to oppose the Lyonnaise uprising of 1834 as ill-timed—should have encouraged the advocates of immediate violence. This suggests a possible modification of Signor Saitta's opinion—Buonarroti may have exploited the schism without having originally provoked it. On the other hand he may have opposed the Lyons insurrection because it was initiated by working class groups outside his control. As one of his letters to Delorme suggests, even after Lyons, he felt that violence had a salutary, invigorating effect on the public morale.⁸¹

At all events, the application of Leroux's oft cited scheme makes no sense at all in view of the personalities involved. Raspail was a "passionate democrat" with a personal cult of Marat and a paranoid fear of police spies; by no stretch of the imagination can one associate him with a Queue de Danton (whatever that may be) nor with Marrast and the men of the *National*. He was moreover a friend and admirer of Buonarroti.⁸² Godefroy Cavaignac may have been condemned to death by a few fanatics but the author of the "Force Révolutionnaire" was, in terms of the political spectrum of his day, well to the left of a moderate center; in many ways his intellectual position was closer to Buonarroti's (whom he also knew and admired) than was that of the neo-Babouvists.⁸³ In view of the personalities involved, indeed, it seems doubtful whether there is any justification for the widespread tendency to interpret this brief factional dispute within one radical organization in terms of general

⁸¹ See p. 103, n25, *supra*.

⁸² Weill, *Parti Républicain*, pp. 41-44 and A. Mathiez, "F. V. Raspail chez Albertine Marat," *Annales Révolutionnaires* (Oct.-Dec. 1911), VI, 660-666.

⁸³ G. Cavaignac, "La Force Révolutionnaire," *Paris Révolutionnaire* (Paris, 1838), I, vii-lxxxiv.

currents over an eighteen-year period within the republican movement as a whole. Insofar as Buonarroti is concerned, at least, this tendency has led to a serious distortion of his position.

Historically, there is surely no justification for the customary practice, in which most authorities have indulged, of evoking not only the dubious Robespierriest-Dantonist analogy but also the controversy between the Gironde and the Mountain (the latter included both the former categories after all) and also the post-Revolutionary controversy between the *école américaine* and the *école conventionnelle* (again the latter includes both the previous categories) in attempting to clarify (!) distinctions between the various schools of thought.⁸⁴ The confusion engendered by this indiscriminate lumping together of all the various mythologies of the Great Revolution has been further compounded by the tendency to interpret the schism as the first stirrings of that "class struggle" which was to shake the establishment of the Second Republic in 1848.

Although Raspail's Committee attacked declamations against property as premature and called for prior political reform, this does not in itself offer a sufficient reason for identifying it as does Signor Saitta, with "the purely bourgeois fraction of the French republicans" especially since the statement in question specifically referred to social reform as an ultimate aim and to the need for popular education to alter current notions concerning property.⁸⁵ Aside from the implicit rejection of an elitist political theory in favor of dependence on a democratic majority, there was nothing in Raspail's statement that conflicted with the position adopted by Buonarroti. Raspail's other instructions to the working class members which emphasized moderation in all things, earning an honest living by hard work, and exemplifying the "republican virtues,"⁸⁶ scarcely differed from the codes of Buonarroti's own secret societies.

⁸⁴ See, for example, Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 261-266.

⁸⁵ See Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 155.

⁸⁶ Weill, *Parti Républicain*, p. 88.

Insofar as the outcome of the schism in the Société des Droits de l'Homme represented a victory of the past over the present marked by the emergence of Robespierre's discourse of April 24, 1793 as the "charter of French socialists" during the July Monarchy it seems reasonable to assign a large share of credit for the outcome to Buonarroti. In this respect, the outcome of the schism marked an important shift in the climate of radical opinion. Unlike the socialist innovators of the earliest decades of the nineteenth century who tended to reject the ideologies of 1793, the generation that followed Fourier and Saint-Simon were, despite their varying communist and socialist ideas, largely united in their cult of the First Republic.⁸⁷ This was largely due to the fact that whereas the first generation had lived through the "spotted actuality" of the revolutionary decade, the second generation—men like Auguste Blanqui, Louis Blanc, Etienne Cabet, and Pierre Leroux—came of age along with the "religion of revolution." But it was in this direction also that the prestige and authority exerted by Buonarroti (who had after all been born more than a decade before Fourier) made itself felt. Insofar as the outcome of the schism pointed the way (in Signor Saitta's words) to the future differentiation between bourgeois and proletarian secret societies,⁸⁸ to the future struggle between the partisans of the red flag and those of the tricolor—Buonarroti's contribution was not unimportant but it was, in my opinion, largely negative. Enmeshed in the ambiguities of the tradition he helped to shape, future contestants in the struggles of 1848 and 1870 would find it difficult to extricate themselves.

Buonarroti did not doubt that there were "still germs of true patriotism among the working people"—that they were capable of being ultimately redeemed. He "encouraged contact with the workers and artisans of the great Parisian suburbs;" they became the chief targets of his semi-legal propaganda. According to Signor Garrone:

⁸⁷ E. Fournière, *Les Théories Socialistes au XIX^e Siècle de Babeuf à Proudhon* (Paris, 1904), pp. iii-iv. One might note that Proudhon, born more than a decade after Cabet, is here as elsewhere, an exception to the rule, for he kept alive the Fourierist approach towards Jacobinism.

⁸⁸ See Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 156.

... the most ardent followers of Buonarroti had the sense of being dedicated to the redemption of a class. Because the labor movement was still in embryo in its organization and in its consciousness of itself, these first babouvists thought not so much of the proletariat in today's meaning of the term, but of the majority of the people abused by a minority of the privileged, of the poor exploited by the rich. But there was in all of them the feeling of having descended into the arena as a combattant in the gigantic struggle of classes. In this resides the historic importance of Buonarrobian propaganda in these years.⁸⁹

Most of the Buonarrobian propaganda of this period was indeed directed against the members of the "pays légal" as "enemies of the people" and nakedly appealed to the class interest of those who were being exploited. But one must remember that Buonarroti was himself dedicated to a cause that repudiated the sense of class interest. His frankly demagogic appeals revealed his lack of confidence in the capacity of the "proletariat" to redeem itself.⁹⁰ Like the Hébertists, the working people were capable of being good citizens in an established Republic but were bad pilots in the storms which preceded its establishment.

The structure and codes of his later conspiratorial organizations show clearly that Buonarroti retained a poor opinion of "the ideological and organizational capacity of the proletariat, to whose mythology he made no contribution."⁹¹ On the secret level of his double life he never deviated from his original ultimate scheme: "an examination of Buonarroti's sectarian organization confirms not only the pre-Marxian . . . but also the pre-Saint-Simonist and pre-Fourierist character of his communism which always projected itself in terms of a universalistic scheme appropriate to the eighteenth century mentality."⁹²

⁸⁹ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 266.

⁹⁰ According to Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 133, he used the term "proletariat" in the sense of "the most numerous class" while d'Argenson used it to mean "the working population." Like the much abused "People," the term "proletariat" was subject to an intensive semantic exploitation by radical Frenchmen during the 1830's and '40's. The ambiguities inherent in Buonarroti's use of both terms are suggested by his previously cited contradictory paragraph referring simultaneously to "great numbers" and "small numbers." See p. 72, *supra*.

⁹¹ Saitta, I, 138.

⁹² Saitta, I, 118.

Indeed one must qualify the above statement by taking into consideration the fact that this "universalistic" scheme involved the concept of France as "the pilot of the vessel of humanity" and that it was projected in terms that were particularly appropriate to the mentality of a Jacobin nationalist. To suggest, as does Signor Saitta, that Buonarroti remained aloof from the chauvinism of French radicals during the early nineteenth-century and that moreover this chauvinism was largely confined to unenlightened popular opinion and to bonapartists, that it was rarely embraced by republicans, and certainly never by "Buonarrotian democrats"⁹³ is to ignore a most vital aspect of the heritage of 1793 which was transmitted by Buonarroti among others and emphatically expressed by such anti-bonapartist democratic republicans as Albert Laponneraye, Louis Blanc, Alphonse Esquiros, Armand Barbès, Martin Bernard, and Ledru Rollin. All these men were Robespierrists, and if the term "Buonarrotian democrat" has any significance, then several of them must qualify. Blanqui, of course, was also capable of extreme chauvinism especially in 1870. Although Buonarroti believed that virtuous men could be found in various countries, he never regarded loyalty to the nation-state as an obstacle to the achievement of a "community of goods and labor." To the contrary, virtue was intimately related to patriotism. The egalitarian component in Buonarroti's thought can never, without falsification, be detached from the total effort to make the "love of country" the predominant passion of the citizenry.

Dr. Lehning, who elsewhere distinguishes carefully between Buonarroti's elite and the Marxist proletariat, nevertheless regards Buonarroti as the man who forged "the first link in the chain of international . . . organizations which led three decennia later to the foundation of the *First International*." This opinion is based

⁹³ *Ibid.*, I, 145. Saitta bases this interpretation on Buonarroti's rejection of the possible union of France and Belgium in 1830, much as Mathiez based his interpretation of Robespierre as an anticipator of the League of Nations, on the latter's opposition to Brissot's pro-war policy in 1792. Both interpretations ignore the complexity of Jacobin nationalism, much as some contemporary interpretations of the "popular front" period of the Comintern tended to ignore the complex nature of Soviet nationalism.

on the resemblance between a "general law" of the Charbonnerie Démocratique Universelle: "to link to a common center all the friends of equality, whatever their country or religion may be" and Article One of the statutes of the First International: "to obtain a central point of communication and cooperation among the workers of different countries who aspire to the same end. . . ."⁹⁴ These two citations might, instead, have been offered as a cautionary example for historians of the confusion that results from semantic imprecision, of how a superficial similarity in wording may mask a fundamental dissimilarity in meaning. The "end" to which the members of the First International ostensibly aspired—"the economic emancipation of the working class . . . to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means"⁹⁵ was quite different from the end Buonarroti had in mind, when he rejected "the order of the economists" which was "the Order of Egoism" in favor of "Robespierre's Order of Equality" in order to substitute "for base cupidity, the love of country. . . ."⁹⁶

As Signor Saitta has shown, this distinction was written into the very structure of the Charbonnerie Démocratique Universelle. Thus the Vente of the "Apprentices" whose code incorporated the popular "socialist" catchwords of the day was relegated to a lowly position within the organization. The "Fourth Estate" had to be appealed to in terms of material interests because they had been rendered incapable, by centuries of servitude, of selfless service. Members belonging to the higher echelons (represented by the Montagne des Maîtres), however, were encouraged to learn more of the ultimate scheme of the organization, which relegated economic matters to a minor position.

It is not without significance that, according to the Charbonnerie Démocratique Universelle, the doctrinal formulae of the Mountain of the masters, of men a good deal more mature and convinced than the

⁹⁴ Lehning, "Buonarroti and His Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 135.

⁹⁵ From the Preamble to the Provisional Statutes adopted by the International Workingman's Association, cited in Otto Rühle, *Karl Marx, His Life and Work*, tr. E. and C. Paul (New York, 1929), p. 255.

⁹⁶ Buonarroti (Bronterre), pp. 9-10.

simple apprentices, constituted a complete involution with respect to the predominance of the political element in contrast to the more socialistic formulae of the *Vente of the Apprentices*.⁹⁷

It seems clear then that the working population played a subordinate and even an incidental role in Buonarroti's plan for the regeneration of humanity. Any analysis of his ultimate scheme must conclude, as well as begin, with the Jacobin eschatology rather than with the industrial reports of the nineteenth century. And indeed his own list of the "great men of antiquity and of his day" begins with a legendary Cretan ruler—Minos (whose "laws" supposedly had inspired Hérault de Séchelles in drafting the Constitution of 1793) and ends with a Jacobin martyr—Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau (who had drafted the Montagnard proposals for public education before he was assassinated on the day he voted for Louis XVI's death).⁹⁸ Because he always approached the goal of "sacred equality" from the viewpoint of an eighteenth-century political moralist who specifically denounced the Order of the Economists, every attempt to identify his position in relation to the various schools of nineteenth-century socialist thought, such as the Saint-Simonists, Fourierists, Icarian Communists, Christian socialists, Owenites, etc., leads to distortion and confusion.

From an examination of his fiscal policy alone it is possible to arrive at the fantastic conclusion that he could have become finance minister under the Third Republic. If one attempts, more plausibly, to ascertain his position on the very disparate solutions to the social problem, represented by Louis Blanc's "state socialism" on one hand, and Etienne Cabet's "Icarian communism" on the other, it becomes evident that Buonarroti paid little attention to the details of economic organization. A passage in the *Conspiration* comparing Babeuf and Robert Owen led Mathiez to argue that there was a

⁹⁷ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 119.

⁹⁸ He appears on Buonarroti's list (given in full by Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 44-45) under the more republican name of Michel Lepelletier. Felix Lepelletier, his brother, was intimately associated with Buonarroti in the Babeuf Conspiracy. Saitta (I, 74-75 and II, 282) suggests that this association continued during Buonarroti's later years. Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 157n disagrees. A study of Lepelletier's career would fill an important gap.

close affinity between the social thought of the founder of New Harmony and that of Buonarroti. Signor Saitta concurs and has discovered several letters in which Buonarroti's interest in New Harmony, and in other Owenite experiments, is clearly expressed. Although he notes that Buonarroti, unlike Owen, always associated social reform with the relocation of political power, Signor Saitta regards this as simply a difference in tactics; citing Bronterre O'Brien's observation that, by trying to achieve social reform before the relocation of political power had been achieved, Owen had put the cart before the horse.⁹⁹

In terms of Buonarroti's own hierarchy of values, however, a fundamental difference in doctrine was also involved. To the tactical priority of political revolution must be added the doctrinal priority of the achievement of a community where all could participate equally in, what a devoted disciple called, "that political existence without which man is on earth nothing but a piece of dead matter."¹⁰⁰ The penultimate goal was a republic of virtuous citizens; to that end a "classless society" (in the sense that—as Mably had put it—"the rich found no advantage in being rich and the poor did not try to become so") was an indispensable necessity.¹⁰¹ Buonarroti welcomed New Harmony as one more convincing demonstration, along with Sparta and Paraguay, that this requirement was not impossible. He clearly regarded the historic sanction that protected private property as the greatest obstacle to the attainment of his New Jerusalem; his conspiracy was dedicated to the destruction of this institution. But to imply that a "community of goods and labor" rather than a virtuous Republic was the end goal of his conspiracy is to put the ideological cart before the horse.

In an era when "socialism" was defined as "the opposite of egoism and individualism,"¹⁰² he could certainly be called a socialist.

⁹⁹ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 64, 68. A. Mathiez, "Babeuf et Robert Owen, comparés et défendus par Buonarroti," *Révolution de 1848* (1910), VII, 233-239.

¹⁰⁰ B. Hauréau, *La Montagne*, p. 96.

¹⁰¹ See "Scritto Buonarrotiano sulla Comunione dei Beni e dei Lavori," in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, 139-141 where the above citation from Mably appears.

¹⁰² "Petit Manuel Républicain à l'usage des habitants des campagnes," cited Weill, *Parti Républicain*, p. 243.

In an era when an "organ of communism" protested the distribution of prizes to outstanding students because it inoculated "children with the vices of an iniquitous world" and made impossible "the radical transformation of public manners in the sense of the social ideal which the great victim of the Thermidorean reaction had hoped to realize,"¹⁰³ he was also a communist. But he should not be regarded as a reformer who was primarily concerned with augmenting the production of useful goods and who therefore attacked luxury; whose approach to social problems was shaped by the desire to reorient the national economy so that it would provide "for all men their minimum basic needs: food, clothing, housing, health, education."¹⁰⁴ To the contrary, the passive subject of the modern "welfare state" was almost as far removed from Buonarroti's ideal "active" citizen as was the luxury-loving entrepreneur. To put ration cards and social security benefits above the ballot box and the barricades; to use the latter simply in order to obtain the former would be, for him, almost a sacrilegious act. Similarly, a co-operative movement in the Owenite tradition, which might flourish as an apolitical organization, under the aegis of a nonrepublican government—a constitutional monarchy, for example—was entirely alien to his mode of thought.

As a "terrible simplifier" who refused to compromise with the logical necessity imposed by his mystique and who therefore attacked all political reform that stopped short of the institution of private property, Buonarroti brought the legacy of 1793 in contact with the ferment of socialist ideas that was being generated by the economic problems of the nineteenth century. With respect to these ideas, however, he showed little discrimination, little or no interest in the details that divided one school from another. So long as they did not, like the Saint-Simonists' schemes, emphasize expanding industrial production as a desirable social goal, the various conflicting socialist and communist schemes of the early nineteenth

¹⁰³ "Observations sur le caractère...des récompenses inégalitaires," *La Fraternité de 1845, Organe du Communisme* (Sept. 1846) in *Murailles Révolutionnaires*, ed. A. Delvau, I, 176-177.

¹⁰⁴ Pia Onnis, "Filippo Buonarroti, la Congiura di Babeuf e il Babuvismo," Extract from the *Nuova Rivista Storica* (1952), XXXVI, 25.

century seem to have been generally acceptable to him. This was in marked contrast to his position vis-à-vis the various schools of nineteenth-century political thought and the actual political regimes of his day. Here he was intransigent, here his sense of discrimination was acute, and here the veneration he inspired was purposefully channelled.

There is little possibility of distortion or confusion in tracing Buonarroti's political party line during those fifty years which gave France "seventeen forms of government, three revolutions, two insurrections, without counting the uprisings."¹⁰⁵ And he did not have to go to Sparta, Paraguay, or Indiana for his model; he had only to recall the days of his youth. With respect to the vital political issues of his last days he was, indeed, as much at home, as much in his element, as was Robert Owen in his factory at New Lanark.

4. AT THE BARRICADES, IN THE NAME OF THE REPUBLIC

The majority of the bourgeoisie of 1789...believed there was a contradiction between these two aspects of Robespierre's policy: implacable struggle against the aristocracy at the moment, against constitutional liberalism in the future.¹⁰⁶

Georges Lefebvre, 1956

From the accession of Louis XVIII until the flight of Charles X, Buonarroti had been unalterably opposed to any compromise with the Bourbon Monarchy. It was not the failure of the experiment in constitutional monarchy but its success that he dreaded. He openly welcomed, as his only ally, the shift in royal policy from moderation to extremism. His anxiety was focused on the possibility that wiser heads might prevail and that the policy of the Ultras might *not* grow more reckless:

We have just learned of the change in French ministers; will this turn out well, or badly? Will they act with great foolishness or will they

¹⁰⁵ Maxime Du Camp, *Souvenirs de l'Année 1848* (Paris, 1876), p. 17.

¹⁰⁶ The French phrase is "lutte implacable," See Lefebvre, Review Article, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (1956), XXVIII, 422-425.

know enough to contribute to our misfortune by moderating their fury and their desire for vengeance? But whatever their conduct may be, can one pin one's hopes on public virtue? The picture you have drawn of Parisian egoism frightens me and makes me fear that nothing more can be done to bring such fetid mud to life; however, I hope and I will continue to hope until I draw my last breath. A great imprudence on the part of those who govern could tire the patience of the masses who have only been lightly touched by the public corruption and furnish some virtuous men with the occasion and means to serve their country and all of humanity. We are waiting to see what the Charleses, the Polignacs, the La Bourdonnaies, etc., will do and hope their fever will increase.¹⁰⁷

Those who sought a middle ground between the "divine right" of Kings and the "divine right" of the people represented an infinitely more dangerous antagonist than those ultras and émigrés who frankly represented the hopeless cause of counterrevolution. Such a middle ground had already been provided by the various "false" revolutions of 1787, 1789, and 1795; a regime, strong enough to withstand any future revolution, might well be founded upon it; it was attractive to most men of good will after 1815 and its vices were not readily apparent, even to a man of d'Argenson's calibre.

Thus, from 1815 to 1830, the dominant note in Buonarroti's correspondence had been an opposition not to the renewed alliance of throne and altar but to the liberal culture of the Restoration, which opposed this alliance in terms of the temper of 1789 and a revival of Voltairean anti-clericalism. After the July Revolution, this position adapted itself well to the needs of the opponents of the Citizen King. A thoroughgoing rejection of the liberalism of 1789 was to be the trademark of a radical propaganda campaign, best illustrated perhaps by the previously mentioned polemic against Lafayette which accused the liberals of identifying liberty with license, of attacking the aristocratic despotism in order to replace it by the anarchical reign of the Charter, leaving them "free" to pursue their own selfish interests rather than the common good.

¹⁰⁷ Letter from Buonarroti to the Vadier family, August 17, 1829, in Galante Garrone, "Buonarroti e i Convenzionali," *Movimento Operaio*, V, 36.

"The liberals demand freedom of the press only for themselves, for they are the only ones who are literate, freedom of trade for themselves, to whom all social riches belong, freedom of conscience in order to be egoists and immoral. . . ." Lafayette's definition of the inalienable rights of man was "absurd and revolting." The right of each individual to dispose of his own person as he sees fit authorizes him "to commit suicide, to sell himself, to prostitute himself, to be idle, to exploit his fellow man." "The liberty of *all* opinions is the tolerance of atheism, of immorality, of egoism, and the negation of an uncontestable fact, the necessity for a social morality."¹⁰⁸ The basic opposition of the radical current of opinion represented by Buonarroti to the spirit of free enquiry could scarcely be expressed more forcefully. It should be noted that this attack on the "fayettist" heresy was not directed by a party in power during a period of unprecedented national emergency. To the contrary it was put forth by a group that was violently opposed to the established regime. Even while attacking "the Establishment" then, the secular "puritan" continued also to oppose nonconformity and dissent.

During the Restoration, as during much of the nineteenth century, the eighteenth-century quarrel between the school of Voltaire and the school of Rousseau tended to be glossed over. Accepted together by friendly liberals, rejected together by hostile conservatives, condemned impartially by the Catholic Church, their close association, as well as their enormous popularity, during the Restoration was to be immortalized in the sarcastic chanson—"C'est la faute à Voltaire c'est la faute à Rousseau." Against this current of opinion also, Buonarroti fought, with all the fervour of an eighteenth-century evangelist struggling against latitudinarian indifference. For him, as his notes on Vadier's memoirs show, the issue was a live one. After 1830, his efforts to inject it into the stream of political controversy met with success. The sudden extinction of the Voltairean vogue after 1830 was no less remarkable than

¹⁰⁸ E. Gigault, *Vie Politique de Marie Jean Roch Yves Gilbert Moité, Marquis de Lafayette* . . . (Paris, 1833), p. 5. Cited by Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 164.

its sudden emergence in 1817.¹⁰⁹ Its displacement by the "God of Rousseau who was also the God of Buchez, of Louis Blanc, and of Raspail" was clearly related to the shift in the prevailing cultural regimes—(from neoclassicism to romanticism)—and in political regimes—after Charles X and his Jesuits had given way to the Citizen King, anticlericalism lost some of its appeal as an opposition cause. After Buonarroti's return to France, however, the various arguments advanced by acquaintances like Buchez, Raspail, and Louis Blanc echoed precisely the personal predilections that had been earlier manifested in his attack on Vadier. "To continue Voltaire today, would be dangerous and puerile. Each epoch has its work! That of our time is to revive religious sentiment, to combat the insolences of skepticism and to mock its mockeries."¹¹⁰

Along with the rejection of Voltairean skepticism and the apotheosis of Rousseau went the elevation of Robespierre to the stature of a "new Moses" who incorporated in his person all the positive achievements of the twenty-five year epic of war and revolution.¹¹¹ A surprising number of socialists and republicans contributed to Robespierre's spectacular emergence, in the 1830's and '40's, as the new Messiah of the secular redemption of mankind. The metaphor is not far-fetched. The conjunction of his name with that of Jesus Christ is so frequent in the literature of the period that it seems remarkable only in retrospect, out of the context of that peculiar *zeitgeist* that gave rise to an *école catholique-conventionnelle* and to Lamennais' interpretation of the *New Testament*. Although his career was a living tribute to the glorification of Robespierre; although he denounced atheism, regarded the cult of a Supreme Being as socially necessary, and approved of mingling spiritual with temporal categories, Buonarroti remained aloof from

¹⁰⁹ Of the twenty-nine editions of Voltaire's *Oeuvres Complètes* that appeared during the first half of the nineteenth century, twenty-four were published during the Bourbon Restoration, five between 1830 and 1838, and none at all thereafter until 1852. See *La Révolution de 1848 Exposition Organisée Par le Comité National du Centenaire*, Catalogue (Paris, 1948), p. 67.

¹¹⁰ This attack on Pyat by Louis Blanc appeared in the *Revue de Progrès*. See Weill, *Parti Républicain*, p. 186n.

¹¹¹ See Martin Bernard, *Dix Ans de Prison* (Paris, 1861), pp. 202–203.

the romantic mysticism which focused on the Cross rather than the ballot box or the barricades. While others were exploiting the symbolism of the New Testament to sanctify the secular heroes of the day, he (along with some young disciples) tended to judge those who had pursued a religious vocation in terms of the secular messianism of the Great Revolution. There is no mention of divine revelation, no mention of religion at all in his references to Christ, who appears on his list of "great men" (in a mixed company which includes Pythagoras, the Gracchi, Sir Thomas More, Mably, Oudet) as a "friend of the People and of Equality" who had been crucified by "aristocrats and priests."¹¹² Elsewhere he referred to Jesus as a "generous preacher of equality and virtue" who had had the best of intentions¹¹³—much as Christian theologians referred to pagan philosophers and Old Testament prophets who had anticipated parts of the Christian faith but had died before the coming of the Savior.

His Book of Revelations had been written during the Enlightenment. For him, the Word had become Flesh with the advent of the First Republic: "Before the French Revolution had exhibited to the world the extraordinary spectacle of several million men proclaiming and sealing with their blood, those eternal truths which, in antecedent times had been known to a few philosophers, the design of putting the people in *movement* by the sole force of these truths might have appeared chimerical . . ."¹¹⁴

After 1792-94, the drama of salvation was finally projected on the political arena. "The question was no longer how to create new opinion but how to concentrate and organize that which had already existed so short a time before."¹¹⁵ Social redemption depended on political regime for the forms of government determined an entire "way of life." "No people would be other than the nature of its government made it." In keeping with the authentic ethos of 1793, the mingling of spiritual and temporal categories took the form

¹¹² Saitta, *Buonarroti*, II, Appendix B., p. 44.

¹¹³ Buonarroti, letter from Brussels, April 16, 1830, cited in Bernstein, *Buonarroti*, p. 190.

¹¹⁴ Buonarroti (Bronterre), p. 91.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

of a partial transformation of the *respublica* into the *ecclesia*—the Republic was endowed with many of the attributes of a religious institution. “There is, citizens, a close resemblance between the justice that theologians attribute to divinity and that which is the original end of Republics”; this word *Republic, res publica, the public thing* indicates sufficiently its spirit and its rules.¹¹⁶ In the same spirit that the fundamentalist approaches the scriptures, Buonarroti approached the “ideal type” abstract constructions of the eighteenth-century philosophers. No compromise was possible with monarchy since by definition it excluded its subjects from the practice of virtue and rendered the performance of citizenship impossible. (This attitude was so pervasive during the 1830’s that even Orleanists incorporated it in their defense of the characteristic institutions of the July Monarchy. “They say we have not enough virtue to live as a republic,” wrote Armand Carrel. “I respond that perhaps we have not enough vices to live as a monarchy.”)¹¹⁷

His radical attack on the moderate center was framed in terms of the neoclassic dogma associated with the one and indivisible republic. Parliaments or charters, all institutions which contributed to the division or limitation of political power and all organizations which protected the rights of dissident minorities he regarded simply as modifications that made possible the continuation of a corrupt social order and as tokens of its degeneracy. In the Anglo-American liberal tradition, he saw only the continuation of the aristocratic principle of the Ancien Regime and an encouragement of the free play of private interests that made impossible the expression of a disinterested “general will.” He regarded the Anglo-American opposition to the continental powers of the Holy Alliance in the same light as he had regarded the liberal opposition to the Bourbons during the Restoration. (Indeed the young Auguste Blanqui, addressing the *Amis du Peuple* on February 2, 1832 referred to Wellington’s rejection of the Reform Bill in much the same hopeful tone

¹¹⁶ From Buonarroti’s “confession of faith” before the Vendôme Court, in *Débats*, IV, 248, cited Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 129.

¹¹⁷ A. Carrel, Article in the *National*, January 21, 1832, *Oeuvres Politiques et Littéraires d’Armand Carrel*, ed. E. Littré and J. Paulin (Paris, 1857–59), III, 88.

as Buonarroti had referred to the reactionary policy of Polignac and Charles X in 1829.¹¹⁸) His invective was directed not so much against the obvious forces of counter-revolution but against the subtler enemy represented by the England of Canning and the Age of Reform and the America of the Age of Jackson.

The parliamentary institutions, the industrial and commercial progress, the robust individualism, the spirit of tolerance, the foreign policy of Canning . . . and in brief, all those aspects of the British world on which the liberalism of the various European countries was beginning to base its hopes . . . were evaluated as the illusory masking of an essentially conservative and aristocratic reality, dominated by the privileges of wealth and a still feudal spirit.¹¹⁹

Although Pitt's countrymen had become Canning's countrymen, for Buonarroti they remained "slaves" obstinately clinging to the chains that bound them, incapable of the self-government required of citizens of a Republic. Anyone who could believe that Canning actually favored the liberation of Greece or South America was a victim of his own gullibility—"Credat Judaeus!".¹²⁰ In 1836, four years after the passage of the Reform Bill, he found only in O'Brien's translation of his *Conspiration Pour l'Egalité* a hopeful sign that, in England, all was not "avidity for wealth;" elsewhere he saw only a nation of "seigneurs" and "priests of Plutus"¹²¹ who were linked, by the "shopkeeper's spirit," to the young nation across the ocean that they had colonized. "The American spirit is above all the spirit of Old England." The United States was simply "a feudal regime clothed in democratic form;" a "corporation of merchants and property owners" as the anti-Lafayette polemic, written at the same time as de Tocqueville's classic, described democracy in America during Jackson's presidency.¹²²

¹¹⁸ See citation in Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 411-412.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹²⁰ See Buonarroti's notes on a summary of *In Morte di Giorgio Canning: Canti di J. Amedeo Ravina* (London, 1828), sent him by a friend, in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 62-63.

¹²¹ Buonarroti, letter to Bronterre O'Brien (1836) cited in Bernstein, *Buonarroti*, 260-263; Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, p. 427.

¹²² Citation from Gigault's pamphlet in Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 166-167.

This anti-American polemic has a modern ring but, whatever its future, it was conceived in the context of the past, when terms like "feudal" and "corporation" referred to the institutions of the Ancien Regime and when the system of patronage and "influence" in the parliamentary politics of Georgian England had aroused the disgust of French observers.¹²³ Was not the "spoils system" evidence of spiritual kinship with the Thermidoreans who had destroyed the Republic of Virtue and with those royal ministers in France and Britain who, in the nineteenth century, opposed its revival? The very name of the national government—the "United States"—was suggestive of the Girondin heresy that had opposed Jacobin centralization by reviving aristocratic localism and feudal provincialism. "One must beware of regarding the emancipation of America as a triumph for the cause of humanity . . . The thought which presided at the foundation of the American federation, was . . . the thought of an aristocracy and of egoism."¹²⁴

The cleavage among French republicans, which took the form in the 1830's of an argument between the *école conventionnelle* and the *école américaine*, involved a great and fateful debate that was fought against a shifting background and frequently on shifting ideological territory and that in France gave rise to a century and a half of continuous historiographical argument. Its historic resonance was so powerful that it echoed back to the ancient dispute between Sparta and Athens, Rome and Carthage and forward to the mid-twentieth century when its overtones could be heard over airwaves that covered the entire world. During the 1830's, however, it was in essence simply a revival of the eighteenth-century argument between the anglophiles and the anglophobes. Although Buonarroti's approach to the characteristic institutions of Victorian England resembled that of nineteenth-century humanitarians and social reformers who reacted to the factory reports of the industrial commissions; like certain passages in the *Conspiration Pour L'Egalité*,

¹²³ On anglophobia during the Ancien Regime see important study by Frances Acomb, *Anglophobia in France, 1763-1789, An Essay in the History of Constitutionalism and Nationalism* (Durham, N. C., 1950), p. 31.

¹²⁴ Citation from Gigault's pamphlet, Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 276, n53.

which evoked the archaic myth of the pastoral idyll and like countless speeches by French republicans during the nineteenth century, it merely echoed an anglophobia that had been shaped by the agrarian predilections of the eighteenth-century physiocrats.¹²⁵ Although his image of "perfidious Albion" struck a sympathetic chord among a new generation of chauvinistic radicals who suffered from the "maladie de Waterloo," all of its essential features were derived from a Jacobin scapegoat that had been fully defined during the First Republic by Robespierre and that had been shaped by the earlier opposition of "the incipient school of Rousseau" to the anglophile school of Voltaire and Montesquieu.¹²⁶

Thus Buonarroti's radical attack on the laws and institutions of the post-Thermidorean world was based on his undeviating adherence to an eighteenth-century eschatology in the face of four decades of historic change. His *Observations sur Maximilien Robespierre* (published by his party journal, the Belgian *Le Radical*, in 1837) should serve as ample proof of the fixity of his historical vision. This posthumously published work was Buonarroti's sermon to posterity, his summation of the lessons to be learned from the public life of the "illustrious legislator." Future hagiographers would find little to add to Buonarroti's portrayal, which sketched Robespierre's career, in reverent terms from the time "he arrived at the Estates General in 1789 full of veneration for the memory of Rousseau, whose works he had meditated all his life; already he loved and suffered for the people, hated the MIGHTY, disdained the witty and was convinced that everything needed reforming in the civil and political order in France . . ." until he "died poor, cherished by all those who were within reach of knowing him and of appreciating his virtue . . . the victim of immorality."

From the beginning, a clear perception of the great principle that was at stake had set Robespierre apart from revolutionists as well

¹²⁵ See Acomb, *Anglophobia*, pp. 9, 63, 65, on the physiocrat view of the "modern Carthage."

¹²⁶ See *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 37-38, for hostile views of Mably, d'Holbach, Marat, Rousseau, etc. on anglophile school, antedating the War of Independence. Fully developed radical anglophobia is expressed in Robespierre's speech of January 28, 1794.

as royalists, and marked him as a man of destiny who was ultimately destroyed by a conspiracy of the ungodly.

He drew from the principle of national sovereignty rigorous consequences which his colleagues, for the most part, only affected to cover their disdain.

Robespierre thought that the revolution should change from top to bottom the material and moral condition of the working classes; while for the revolutionary faction in the Assembly, the main business was to transfer to the rich, reasonable and active bourgeoisie, the authority which had been monopolized by the nobility and the clergy....

Robespierre was not a materialist; he did not believe in revelation; but he firmly believed in morality and virtue; he thought that the ideas of a just God and a future life should, for the happiness of human society, be identified with the laws of equality.... The atheism of the courtiers before the revolution and that professed in his day by the intriguers, the immoral, the ambitious, and the trouble makers... led him to consider deism and equality as inseparable....

...the court, the nobles, the priests, the bourgeois, the Girondins, the immoral Montagnards, the extortioners and deceivers of the people; all were leagued against him, if not in fact, certainly in intention and purpose. He had for him only the laboring and suffering people.

The hébertistes preached violence, immodesty and atheism; they wanted to block the accomplishment of the mission with which the revolutionary government was charged; they disgusted the people with the revolution. A morality that was less furious but more corrupting and more dangerous characterized the other faction... gangrene devoured the entrails of the Convention, ... applauded by numerous disciples, Danton professed love of money, thirst for power, political indifference, disdain for virtue. The Committee of Public Safety said he was paid by the English. Robespierre perceived in the vices... of this faction, the last obstacle that remained in the way of the attainment of the peaceful reign of equality and the people. He resolved to fight it; he sealed his own sentence of execution.

With his martyrdom a great "lawgiver" was lost to the world and with him went the magnificent opportunity for the redemption of mankind.

At certain historical intervals, rare men appear on the earth, whose genius, virtue or audacity astonish the world and change the face of nations; such were Moses, Pythagoras, Lycurgus; such were Jesus and Mohamet; such would have been Robespierre if there had been fifty men in the Convention capable of understanding him and of seconding him....¹²⁷

Robespierre was probably a rare man and he was certainly celebrated for his virtue. There is something incongruous, however, in the association of his historical presence with the qualities of genius and audacity—the latter term especially tends to evoke the figure of his more indulgent rival. While the man of the era who actually succeeded in astonishing the world and changing the face of nations was surely something more than a “Robespierre on horseback.” One is reminded of a similar incongruity in a poem of the 1830’s which depicted the slight neat figure of the Incorruptible as the incarnation of the spirit of Revolution, with a stormy handsome countenance, a thunderous voice, and a gigantic foot swimming in mud and blood.¹²⁸ It seems evident that the image of Robespierre which was shaped by Buonarroti’s memory and stamped on the consciousness of his impressionable younger contemporaries was a mythical not an historical image. At more than one point, this image conformed closely to Robespierre’s own estimate of himself. At the same time it also bore a marked resemblance to a self-portrait by Buonarroti.

¹²⁷ Buonarroti, *Observations sur Maximilien Robespierre*, introduction by Charles Vellay (Chalon-sur-Saône, 1912), transcript from *La Fraternité*, Sept. 1842, No. 17. See also “Robespierre jugé par Philippe Buonarroti,” *Bulletin de la Société Robespierre* (Oct.–Dec. 1911), I, 21–23.

¹²⁸ L. Lurine, “La Nuit Révolutionnaire,” *Paris Révolutionnaire* (1838), II, 258.

Death and Transfiguration

I. PORTRAIT SKETCH OF THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL REVOLUTIONIST

CURIACE: . . . si Rome demande une vertu plus haute,
Je rends grâces aux Dieux de n'être pas Romain,
Pour conserver encor quelque chose d'humain.

Horace: Si vous n'êtes Romain, soyez digne de l'être;
Et si vous m'égalez, faites-le mieux paraître.
La solide vertu dont je fais vanité
N'admet point de faiblesse avec sa fermeté.

Corneille, *Horace* (Act II, Scene 3)

"No one judges Robespierre impartially," Buonarroti complained to an Italian acquaintance who visited him in Paris in 1831, "they think of the heads he made fall, they forget the grandeur of his projects and the obstacles which they encountered."¹ It was difficult for those who met him to ignore the grandeur of Buonarroti's projects. He was not himself prominently associated with the guillotine. Probably Buonarroti's projects were even grander than those imagined by the lawyer from Arras. Yet despite his personal involvement in the Babeuf Plot, it was almost always with the martyr of Thermidor rather than with the martyr of Prairial, that he became identified among his contemporaries. His frequent use of the pseudonym "Maximilien" along with his *Observations* suggests that this identification existed in his own mind as well.² In

¹ Terenzio Mamiani, "Parigi or fa cinquant'anni," *Nuova Antologia* (1881) cited in Weill, "Philippe Buonarroti," *Revue Historique*, LXXVI, 271.

² To my knowledge he never used either Francois-Noël or Gracchus as an alias. Although he did belong to the Amis Sincères in 1811 under the name of Camille which had also been adopted briefly by Babeuf, his favorite pseudonyms during his last years were "Jean-Jacques" and "Maximilien."

any case, Robespierre became more attractive in retrospect partly because of the charm and "generous solemnity" of the Tuscan patrician who revered him.

For everything suggests that Buonarroti unlike Robespierre had a strong, vital, and magnetic personality which was capable of inspiring affection even among those who were hostile to his cause.³ Those who broke through his reserve found him, not frigid, but warm, impulsive, and likeable. He attracted men and women alike. He was a man who was naturally endowed with many talents, who possessed a rich cultural heritage and who had been born into a secure social position. He was well-bred in every sense of the word. Despite his semi-bohemian ménage and his hand-to-mouth existence, there was nothing about him to inspire the sort of repugnance felt by the fastidious de Tocqueville when confronted by Blanqui's "sickly, sinister, and unclean appearance." In fact, he was good company. As Andryane noted, when one could tear him away from the subject that obsessed him, he was a fascinating conversationalist.

His temperament seems to have been much more complex and less easily fathomed than his ideas. The face he presented to the world, or more accurately, to various artists at various periods in his life, has been preserved in paint (by P. A. Jeanron), in print (by an engraver and several lithographers), and in bronze (by David d'Angers).⁴ Among the more notable of these portraits are an engraving by Parmiani (presumably based on a drawing by Masatti), two lithographs (one signed "C. M." and printed by Paul Petit, the

³ The contrast between the two men is well drawn by Talmon, *Totalitarian Democracy*, p. 176.

⁴ This neo-classic profile in relief on a bronze medallion, which was struck around 1830, gives Buonarroti the features of a Roman senator. It is reproduced by Madeleine Rousseau, "Buonarroti et les Artistes," *Revue des Etudes Italiennes* (1938), III, facing p. 163, as is the painting by Jeanron, facing p. 160. At the time of this article, the Jeanron portrait—which had been painted in 1831 and was originally given by Buonarroti to Charlet—belonged to the collection of Dr. Georges Viau in Paris. In 1943 it was bought by the Louvre. See E. Bénézit, *Dictionnaire des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs* (Paris, 1949-54), for reference to Jeanron's "Portrait de Buonarroti Conspirateur" and to "Vente Georges Viau" of February 24, 1943.

other signed by A. Farcy and printed by Auguste Bry), and the celebrated oil painting by Jeanron.⁵

These portraits were rendered at different stages of Buonarroti's career and show a physiognomy that was drastically altered by the passage of time. The youngish man of the Parmiani engraving has a plump, pleasing, almost smiling countenance and an expression of great sweetness. The middle-aged man of the two lithographs has lost enough hair to provide him with a truly "noble brow." He is rendered, by Farcy, in a formal, conventional fashion, his features frozen into a stern, impassive, and heroic mold. The Jeanron painting, which is much less conventional, more informal and more vivid in its treatment than any of the prints, reveals a formidable old man with a volatile countenance, a prominent vein at his temple, a hooded gaze and curling lips who gazes at the observer with an enigmatic expression that might indicate anger, sarcasm, whimsy, defiance, suspicion, or merely the weariness of a very old man. Faces are often deceptive and portraiture is in any case a subjective medium. The artist's impression of his subject moreover tends to evoke from the observer a reaction that is conditioned by prior knowledge of that subject. In this case, for example, without prior knowledge one would probably not guess that these three portraits represent the same person. Certainly one would never guess that the subject was only five feet, five inches tall.⁶

⁵ For the Farcy lithograph, see frontispiece. Three other portraits of Buonarroti are illustrated facing this page. The original Parmiani engraving appears in the *Panteon dei Martiri della Libertà Italiana*, ed. G. D'Amato (Turin, 1852), 2nd ed., I, facing p. 311. It is listed in the *Catalogue de la Collection des Portraits Français et Étrangers Conservée au Département des Estampes de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, ed. G. Duplessis (Paris, 1897), II, 133, as being undated and "par Parmiani, (d'après Masatti)." This *Catalogue* also lists a lithograph by "A.B.," dated 1838, described as being "en buste, de profil à gauche"—as well as the lithographs by A. Farcy, dated 1850, and "par Paul Petit," dated 1841, which are reproduced here. (An examination of the photograph of this last print shows that it is actually signed by "C.M." and printed by Petit.) Although presumably based on contemporary representations of the living subject, all the lithographs that are dated were printed after Buonarroti's death. I have been unable to determine the age of the subject accurately for any given portrait.

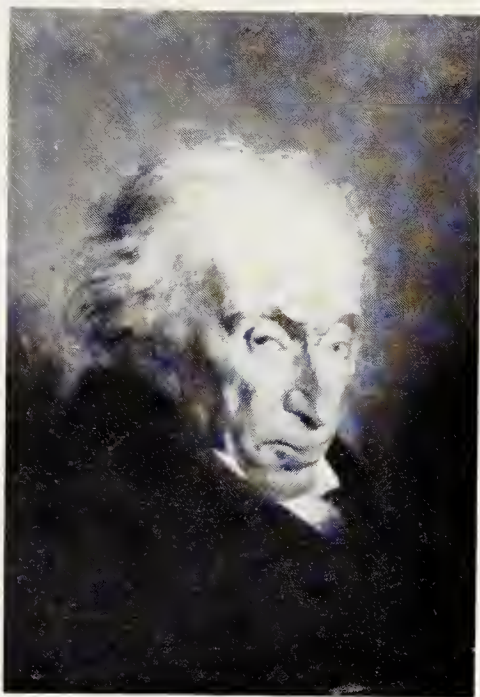
⁶ A physical description of Buonarroti at the age of thirty-four contained in identity card issued upon his release from Plessis is given by Bernstein,



1. Engraving by Parmiani, after Masatti (B.N., Cabinet des Estampes)



2. Lithograph signed "C. M.," printed by Paul Petit (B.N., Cabinet des Estampes)



3. Oil painting by P. A. Jeanron (Louvre)

THREE PORTRAITS OF BUONARROTI

"from youthful disciple, to conspiratorial expert, to venerated patriarch "

From other sources, however, one may legitimately conclude that although Buonarroti was a very short man, his powerful leonine head and general bearing contributed to an appearance that was impressive.⁷ His dignified demeanor evoked favorable comment when he appeared before the Vendôme Court at the age of thirty-five. His striking appearance as a sexagenarian led Andryane to single him out for attention from among the other unknown passers-by on the streets of Geneva. His force of personality was such that he made an indelible impression on a casual student who saw him briefly in Grenoble and never knew what became of him. Many of his pupils—in Italian, music, and conspiracy—remembered him with both the awe and devotion that only a great and dedicated teacher can inspire.

Like all great teachers, although he was a hard taskmaster, he did not provoke resistance but rather unearthed talent and kindled enthusiasm. He was himself an enthusiast, in the wholehearted manner that was considered uncivilized in eighteenth-century fashionable society. This was the quality that made him seem youthful even in his old age, that constituted his closest bond with his favorite philosopher, Rousseau, and that may have endeared him to those younger contemporaries who were coming of age along with the romantic movement. He belonged in the company of those generous spirits who can give themselves entirely, unreservedly, to the cause in which they believe. Fortune had favored him from birth yet he was capable of renouncing his birthright to serve those who were less fortunate. His commitment was absolute, his enthusiasm unquenchable, and his cause noble—"the dignity and happiness of all."

He was generous, but he was not charitable toward his fellow men and he was not humble with regard to himself. He scorned

Buonarroti, p. 13. A passport issued at Grenoble gives the same measurements for Buonarroti at the age of fifty-two and also describes him as a gray-haired musician with a chestnut-coloured beard and an aquiline nose. See citation by Robiquet, *Buonarroti et la Secte des Egaux*, p. 148.

⁷ Jules Pictet de Serget actually remembered him as being "fort grand." *Souvenirs*, cited in Pianzola, "Buonarroti in Svizzera," *Movimento Operaio*, VII, 128.

and despised those who sought only to cultivate their own gardens. He regarded his sensitivity to the wrongs that weighed on humanity as "exquisite." He had sacrificed his personal happiness in the interest of the "bonheur commun" and by this heroic act of self-abnegation he became in his own eyes a stainless knight, without fear, without reproach. Because he always acted without thought of personal gain, his moral armor was impenetrable. He was impervious to criticism from those who had made lesser sacrifices, he was incapable of criticizing himself. He could demand from others blind obedience because he was never acting in his own interest. He hated egoists yet he was himself both proud and wilful, incapable of trusting any leadership save his own. For more than fifty years he acted out, on the stage of history, the role of a hero from some tragedy by Corneille, whose bizarre actions always conform to the noble sentiments that they pronounce and who, even as theatrical characters, always seem somewhat unreal in their superhuman nobility, somewhat repellent in their subhuman psychology.

However much one studies contemporary accounts, Buonarroti's human personality—the flesh and blood reality of the eccentric man who wore spectacles, who had mistresses, and whose vital presence charmed many of his contemporaries—will always remain elusive. But his historical personality seems to me to be less enigmatic. It was, instead, rhetorically emphatic, preserved on canvas for all to see, in J. L. David's famous didactic painting, illustrating in a style of cold violence the Corneillean theme of "The Oath of the Horatii." Like Corneille, Buonarroti exalted "virtue" as an act of will. Like Corneille's heroes, Buonarroti was morally earnest and psychologically obtuse. He was in short, like Horace and Rodrigue, priggish on an heroic scale. In this respect, despite their temperamental difference, he and Robespierre were kindred spirits. To use William James' useful categories, both had not only "tender" minds, that were preoccupied with knowledge of the wrongs that weighed on humanity, both also had "tough" hearts which remained unmoved by Curiace's desire to conserve a vestige of human feeling, untouched by the "saving grace" that tempers justice with mercy.

Both could weep for humanity and observe without pity the suffering of individual human beings. Both felt morally certain of their right to act as prosecutor, judge, and executioner all in one, dispensing justice that was prompt, inflexible and severe. "How happy . . . France would be, how happy humanity would be if Robespierre had been its dictator and reformer!"⁸

In his later years, according to Louis Blanc, Buonarroti had an aura of "august melancholy."⁹ As he grew older, his conversations were tinged with a certain pathos. The day of redemption had come once in his lifetime and humanity had passed it over. As he confessed to an Italian visitor, although he still had high hopes for the future, he could not, at the age of seventy, expect to live to see the great day come again.¹⁰ Although he found scapegoats aplenty, he never did entirely understand why so many people had stood by, watching the opportunity of happiness for all men slip away; why so few people would join him in mourning the great victim of immorality. He was congenitally unable to appreciate the fact that few could forget, as easily as he could, the heads that had fallen. Bronterre O'Brien remembered seeing the "brave and venerable old man at the advanced age of seventy-eight shed tears like a child at the mention of Robespierre's name."¹¹ These tears were either ghostly or apocryphal, however, since the *National* noted the death of the "former general commissioner of the Convention . . . after an existence consecrated by seventy-seven years of virtue" on September 17, 1837. (If his birth date is accurate, he actually died before his seventy-seventh birthday.) His funeral on the following day was the occasion for a demonstration—well over a thousand French patriots and Italian expatriates watched Charles Teste conduct the service, heard Ulysse Trélat give the funeral oration, saw a worker lay a wreath on the grave while pronouncing a benediction:

⁸ Buonarroti, *Observations sur Maximilien Robespierre*, p. 6.

⁹ Louis Blanc, *The History of Ten Years 1830-1840*, tr. anon. (London, 1844-45), II, 221-222.

¹⁰ Mamiani, cited Weill, "Philippe Buonarroti," *Revue Historique*, LXXVI, 271.

¹¹ According to his *Dissertation and Elegy* cited by J. M. Thompson, *Robespierre*, I, xxx.

"Buonarroti, great citizen, friend of equality, the people bestow this wreath, history and posterity will consecrate this ovation."¹²

2. CONCLUSION: THE VERDICT OF HISTORY

Perhaps there is a secret relationship between their life and ours. They inspire us, counsel us. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Robespierre, Saint-Just continue in an invisible form to follow the destiny of the ideas and principles to which they gave their life.

Alphonse Esquiros, 1849

For over a century this prophecy was not realized. In this respect the Orleanist authorities were deceived along with Buonarroti's republican friends. When Teste and d'Argenson sought to raise a permanent monument that would enshrine the memory of their friend, the authorities objected to the proposed inscription, which ran as follows:

PHILIPPE BUONARROTI

Born in Pisa (Tuscany)

November 11, 1761

A Frenchman naturalized by decree of the National Convention

May 27, 1793

Died in Paris, September 16, 1837

My life, stormy, troubled, full of sacrifices and sorrows, marked by an ardent longing for the happiness of others, this is what you have been called upon to judge... (Defense, High Court of Vendôme, 21 Floréal, Year V of the Republic.)

Condemned to deportation, struck by civil death, in dungeons, in exile, in the course of the cruelest persecutions, he nonetheless pursued his work. Nothing could shake his courage. He lived for humanity.¹³

After lengthy correspondence, the authorities agreed to permit the inscription, provided the final two sentences be omitted. The body was exhumed, transferred to a vault provided by d'Argenson, and a copy of the *Conspiration Pour l'Egalité* was buried with it.

¹² Weill, "Philippe Buonarroti," *Revue Historique*, LXXVI, 275.

¹³ Robiquet, *Buonarroti et la Secte des Egaux*, pp. 245-251 cites inscription along with account of whole episode.

The Orleanist bureaucracy had wasted its time. Few pilgrimages would be made to the tomb in the cemetery at Montmartre, marked by a column bearing the bronze medallion by David d'Angers, that represented Charles Teste's and Voyer d'Argenson's last service to their friend.¹⁴ For over a century "history and posterity" would withhold from Buonarroti even the degree of recognition that he had been accorded during his lifetime. In the light of the nineteenth-century compromise, his figure receded into the shadows. A European order which was more or less in equilibrium—a world which he had never made and with which he had refused to come to terms—remained indifferent to him. Save in the "underground" world of conspiracy, his career was so completely forgotten that even those conservative historians, who pointed with alarm to the persistent vitality of the revolutionary tradition, thought, like Taine, of immature students, irresponsible bohemians, "doctors without clients," "lawyers without cases,"¹⁵ and forgot that the amateur or the dilettante, had long before been succeeded by the specialist, by the professional who had dedicated his whole existence to perfecting his novel craft. Only after Lenin's success was the historian to become interested in his predecessor. As the introduction to this essay suggested, now, in the mid-twentieth century, there are signs that the verdict may be changing. There are indeed signs that the present reaction to a century of neglect may swing too far in the other direction, that—having been distorted by diminution—Buonarroti's historic stature may now be distorted by an exaggeration of its true proportions.

There is a tendency for his biographers, trying to rescue their subject from a century of oblivion, to take at face value the emotionally charged tributes paid him by his hero-worshipping

¹⁴ G. Weill, "D'Argenson et la Question Sociale," *International Review of Social History*, IV, 169, n3. Pia Onnis, "Buonarroti... e il Babuvismo," *Nuova Rivista Storica*, XXXVI, 20n notes that Buonarroti's tomb is still in a state of complete neglect. Neither Weill nor Onnis attributes the medallion to David d'Angers, but their description tallies so well with the d'Angers' bronze profile reproduced in M. Rousseau's article (see n. 4 *supra*) that I have assumed them to be the same.

¹⁵ H. Taine, *Les Origines de la France Contemporaine: La Révolution—II—La Conquête Jacobine* (Paris, 1891), p. 10.

contemporaries—to feel that, like Joachim de Prati, they have also made the acquaintance of the greatest political character I have ever met in all my life... the most amiable, talented, vigorous, devoted mind Italy had produced in some centuries... Neither the success of his antagonists, the glory of Napoleon, the combined efforts of the Holy Alliance, the treachery of several of his friends, the calumnies of his enemies, neither exile nor poverty, ever shook his mind nor relented his endeavors; and I found him a man of seventy, with silver hair floating over his most prepossessing countenance, with a Prometheus-like energy, bidding defiance to the powers of the earth, arousing all far and near to break the chains of despotism... To a mind highly cultivated, he joined the most refined taste... which... often softened... his stern manly character, and rendered him, who was the terror of tyrants, the object of love of all who had the honor of being his friends.¹⁶

Add to the figure of Prometheus (the romantic hero *par excellence*) that of a biblical patriarch cast in the heroic mold immortalized by Michelangelo's sculptures and that of a "sage of ancient Greece" and one may arrive at a fair estimate of how Buonarroti's acquaintances regarded him. It is an image which owed much to the romantic ideal but it also testified to Buonarroti's undoubted enormous personal charm. This is a factor that has been too often ignored in estimating his influence. Yet everything suggests that when he died, the source of his celebrity died with him—a good indication of the workings of personal magnetism. As the case of Andryane demonstrates, this personal magnetism was at times sufficient to draw young men despite themselves into his orbit of conspiracy. But there is always the danger that a conspiratorial significance may be falsely attributed to the desire of many young men to visit with this elderly patrician simply for the sake of coming in contact with his remarkable personality, with its many romantic associations. Moreover, in radical circles during the early years of the July Monarchy it was prestigious to be known as an

¹⁶ Joachim P. de Prati, "An Autobiography, Expressly Written for the Penny Satirist," chap. 44, *The Penny Satirist*, April 21, 1838, cited in Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, pp. 398–399, and Lehning, "Buonarroti and his Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History*, I, 139–140, from which the above citation was taken.

acquaintance of Buonarroti's—every admiring reference to him then cannot be taken as evidence of his actual influence on its author.

Recent research may tend to confirm, on paper at least, Andryane's awesome image of an occult power with shadowy tentacles that embraced most of the subterranean resistance movements throughout early nineteenth-century Europe. Dr. Lehning's recent exploitation of Prati's autobiography shows that there was scarcely an underground movement in any country, even including Spain, which was not linked with Buonarroti's organization. Although his biographers may note the spell he exerted over his contemporaries, however, they must also note that these contemporaries did not always share Buonarroti's unfaltering conviction; that Andryane saw him as a man obsessed, that even Prati himself marveled at Buonarroti's "strange infatuation."¹⁷ It is suggestive that this note of skepticism, born of frustration, was generally absent from French sources after Buonarroti's return to Paris. There his figure blended with the colossal archetype of the veteran who had lived through the revolutionary epic; there lay the source of his "strange infatuation" and there it was more widely shared. "Virtuous Buonarroti, venerable patriarch of equality, who lives in our times, as a great and pious memory of the magnificent past."¹⁸ It seems important to distinguish between Buonarroti's role in France where—by working incessantly for the revision of the verdict of Thermidor even while altering its meaning—he helped to shape a national heritage; and his role elsewhere as a cosmopolitan conspirator where inevitable disenchantment came to those accomplices who helped him in his Sisyphean labors, and where he is historically important not so much as a performer but rather as a prototype.

But as they patiently try to follow in detail the multitudinous webs he spun and carefully reconstruct a network that touched on many historic figures and many historic events, his biographers seem, at times, to be less lucid than his contemporaries. Removed by a century from his personality and a climate of opinion given to hero worship, they seem to be equally removed from the reality of the

¹⁷ Cited in Lehning, *International Review*, I, 131.

¹⁸ Hauréau, *La Montagne*, pp. 111-112.

nineteenth-century world which existed outside Buonarroti's orbit. Signor Saitta's work has already become a classic, and deservedly so, but it suffers markedly from this tendency. Although this author's extraordinary talent for minute and patient "ricerche filologico-erudite" and his brilliant handling of what he, with all the passion of the outraged scholar, calls the "mutilations perpetuated by Robiquet" reveal a remarkable analytical finesse; his microscopic examination has led to a loss of perspective, a tendency to overplay the fine Italian hand with which he is so familiar, and to overlook the need for analytical finesse when dealing with the difficult problem of influence. The scholars who have followed, with great skill and patience, the paths he has indicated tend also, in their enthusiasm for the hunt, to overlook the rapidity with which the traces they have uncovered were to vanish after their quarry's death.

In this respect, Signor Galante Garrone offers more cautious guidance; his work, which is concerned with the early nineteenth-century scene as a whole, suffers less from the myopia of the specialist. Whereas Signor Saitta's devotion to his subject leads him, for example, to treat a distinctive figure like Auguste Blanqui as a medium who brought Buonarroti's spirit into contact with Marxism;¹⁹ Signor Galante Garrone more cautiously maps out the various areas where the circles frequented by the elderly Buonarroti and those frequented by the young Marx overlapped.²⁰ The scanty evidence produced in this connection tends to reinforce my opinion that the bonds between the young neo-Hegelian and the elderly Rousseauist, who died when Marx was a nineteen-year-old student in Germany, were both tenuous and indirect. Buonarroti did indeed serve as a "living link" between two generations of Frenchmen but he did not serve, as has often been inferred, as a link between Babeuf and Marx. To the contrary, the myth Buonarroti wove around the "Conspiracy of Equals" tended to tie Babeuf, who was scarcely an orthodox Jacobin, to the *queue de Robespierre*—to the very tradition from which the Marxists attempted, in their own myth, to divorce Babeuf. It is true that Buonarroti was included in *The Holy Family*

¹⁹ Saitta, *Buonarroti*, I, 138.

²⁰ Galante Garrone, *Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari*, *passim*.

as a friend of Babeuf who "reintroduced" the "communist idea in France."²¹ But Marx's other writings, especially those which deal specifically with the French political scene, show that he had nothing but scorn for the "pedants of the old revolutionary tradition of 1793," for "social chauvinists," and for revolutionists who acted like romantic heroes. Buonarroti fitted into all these categories as did many of the later figures who adopted his mode of life.

Blanqui, despite his atheism and his less reverent attitude toward the Republic of Virtue, may legitimately be described as one of Buonarroti's heirs. Bakunin, for all that he was an anarchist, probably owed his "greatest conspirator" the tribute he paid him. The excommunication of Bakunin from the *First International* and the quarrels between the followers of Blanqui and those of Marx during the Paris Commune suggest that the *révolutionnaires de métier* who followed Buonarroti tended to pursue a course that was not charted by the economist who sat in the British Museum. Not until the present century, with the appearance of Lenin on the stage of history, would the torch handed down by Buonarroti come to be deposited in the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute. Only after that event could Buonarroti be legitimately enrolled in the advance guard of the proletarian revolution, as one who helped to plot the means by which the middle class citadel could be taken by storm.

The tendency to underestimate Buonarroti's lifelong fidelity to the words of Mably and Rousseau and to the deeds of the men of 1793 and to overestimate his anticipation of the spirit of the *Communist Manifesto* is, however, not merely a matter of following a party line. It is too ubiquitous to be easily dismissed. After all since Buonarroti can be accurately described as both a communist and a nineteenth-century revolutionist, an insistence on the eighteenth-century context of both his "community of goods and labor" and

²¹ Karl Marx, *La Sainte Famille* in *Oeuvres Complètes de Karl Marx*, tr. J. Molitor, vol. II (Paris, 1927), p. 213. (Buonarroti's name is misspelled in this edition.) Other casual references (both disparaging and approving) made by Marx to Buonarroti's work are noted by David Thomson, *The Babeuf Plot*, pp. 72-75. There are not many such references; one must dig to find them. Buonarroti was certainly a very minor figure in the *dramatis personae* of the Marxian epic.

of his implacable hostility to constitutional liberalism may appear to be simply academic hair-splitting. This is a luxury which a world increasingly polarized around two warring faiths can scarcely afford. Moreover, it seems much more likely, in the light of Daniel Mornet's work and present trends in revolutionary historiography, that the source of Buonarroti's inspiration should be found in the rural economy of Corsica and in the Parisian faubourgs occupied by the sansculottes of the 1790's, rather than in earlier academic studies at the University of Pisa or in a prerevolutionary masonic lodge in Florence.

Yet everything suggests that Buonarroti was one of those exceptional individuals who took the words of the eighteenth-century philosophers quite literally. If he had not regarded the *Contrat Social* as a sacred book, containing promises that the advent of the First Republic seemed to fulfill, he would have never abandoned Tuscany for France, nor adopted his novel mode of existence thereafter. Personally he had nothing to gain and everything to lose by obeying the dictates of his "God of liberty, divine Jean Jacques." His commitment to the Jacobin cause was entirely gratuitous. It closely resembled what, in religious circles, is termed a "calling." He was not a member of the French Third Estate with a list of specific grievances against a bankrupt regime. Instead he was a member of a species that contemporary theories of revolutionary causation have rendered almost extinct—that of the pure idealist. At all times such men are rare. Few of them lived in the late eighteenth century; fewer survived the revolutionary holocaust. It was precisely because Buonarroti approached the events of 1789–94 as an exception to the rule of the majority as enunciated in *Les Origines Intellectuelles de la Révolution Française*, that he remained an exception to the majority of those men of the First Republic who survived the executions of 10 Thermidor. To overlook the sources of Buonarroti's inspiration, is to overlook perhaps the most revolutionary event of the many that occurred during the eighteenth century—the advent on the stage of history of a new kind of idealist: the secular fundamentalist.

References to "Buonarrotismo" are frequently misleading because they wrongly attribute to an apostle, the creation of an original system of ideas. Even before the Revolution, Buonarroti was already a "true believer." After the turn of the century, he helped to transmit a heritage. At no time did he actually found a *new* faith. His historic significance derives from his rigid adherence to a dogma which he, wrongly or rightly, identified with the mystique of 1793; but which, in any case, antedated the era in which he lived most of his life.

Blanquistes there would be, Robespierrists and Babouvists as well, but only by virtue of the inventive imagination of historians will there be Buonarrotists. Although he won several disciples, it was not for himself but for other heroes. He was, above all, lacking that independence of spirit that would lead Blanqui, despite his own attachment to the Jacobin tradition, to inveigh against the "épi-ménides" of '93. Despite his constant involvement in the plots of fellow conspirators, despite his persistent fishing in troubled political waters, he actually accomplished very little as an independent leader. Although he belonged to a school that regarded the improper expenditure of money as more repugnant than the improper expenditure of blood, he was himself responsible for remarkably little bloodshed in an era when both corruption and insurrection were not uncommon. His profession, to be sure, demanded a certain measure of concealment, and his adoption of "gradualist" tactics may account for his later obscurity. As an independent figure at any rate, he was to make a direct and lasting impression on the world at large only as a writer. Perhaps poetic justice demanded that this ardent proponent of the active life, this scorner of the world of books find his small niche in posterity as an author. His main expenditure of time and effort certainly lay elsewhere, yet his written work was not an entirely inappropriate memorial.

The Grand Duke of Tuscany, one recalls, had recognized the literary gifts of the young Buonarroti and Cacaull had reluctantly granted that he had "ample talent in Literature;" perhaps his personal talents were really better suited to the literary career that had been cut short in 1789 than to the political vocation he pursued

thereafter. While his zeal and persistence were proof against repeated arrests and deportations, their very frequency, and certainly the capture of Andryane, showed a certain ineptitude and tendency to blunder. The fact that he gave the impression of ceaseless activity makes one suspect his organizational ability even while offering evidence of his dramatic flair. Yet his talents as a propagandist were great; he could persuade even skeptical young men to follow his own fallen leaders (and—as the Grenoble incident shows—even tone-deaf young men to take singing lessons). It is thus not really surprising that his conspiratorial efforts left little trace whereas his written work, which utilized his gifts as an apostle, survived.

On the surface, then, his was a futile career. His plots were in earnest. He sought to change the course of history not just to “épater le bourgeois.” Yet after fifty years of sacrifice and struggle, he left the world much as he had found it. For a professional revolutionist this is failure and the treatment of posterity, as well as the skeptical resignation of his accomplices, only reflects this fact. Although one might be tempted to regard the Revolution of 1848—when most of the European capitals felt the reverberations of a Parisian explosion which assured the final collapse of the French monarchy—as a partial vindication of Buonarroti’s conspiratorial schemes, one must note that this revolution would surely have occurred if Buonarroti had never appeared on the stage of history and that its outcome was—like the eventual establishment of the Third Republic would be—not a fulfillment, but a denial of his vision. Shortly before his death, as has been noted, he admitted that he would not live to see the realization of his hopes: “For me, it is sufficient that I have always kept my faith alive and inalterable and that no one can accuse me of incoherence.”²²

Buonarroti failed to “make history” partly because he was a captive of a single historical moment. A crucial failure to grasp the changing realities of political life went with his effort to always keep, for almost fifty years, his faith not only alive but inalterable. This consistent fidelity, in the face of four decades of historic change,

²² Mamiani, cited by Weill, “Philippe Buonarroti,” *Revue Historique*, LXXVI, 271.

to his ever-receding "moment of truth," however, was also the source of his most important contribution to the future. By continuing to conform to the code of conduct and the mode of thought expected of an obedient citizen of the Republic of Virtue, long after the certificates of civism had faded and the vigilant authority of the clubs had become extinct, he inaugurated a new vocation. By remaining frozen in a heroic pose that had crystallized under the stress of revolution and war in the setting of an eighteenth-century nation-state while outliving his times for over forty years, he carved out a new career.

Robespierre had been a duly elected political leader, responsible for helping to guide the destinies of a nation in the throes of war and revolution. He and his colleagues wielded extraordinary extralegal powers in a situation that was without precedent. They have been criticized, on grounds that are still hotly debated, for attempting to apply Rousseau's teachings to an area larger than the small city state; but at any rate they operated within a definite institutional framework in a period of national emergency. With the exception of his secret societies, which faithfully reconstructed the code of conduct expected of a virtuous citizen within a republican nation but which vanished with his death, Buonarroti operated in an institutional vacuum. He directed a department of political agitation and propaganda and issued edicts of excommunication as an agent of a government which had ceased to exist. His network was invisible, his headquarters difficult to locate, and the Republic, whose safety he tried to insure, was inhabited by ghosts.

From the codes of these societies, one may conclude that his plans for a New Jerusalem never departed from the boundaries of the separate nation-states of Western Europe; from his correspondence it is evident that he always considered his oath of citizenship given to the French Republic in 1793 as binding.²³ But after he emerged from the prison of Plessis, he was to agitate and conspire not as a statesman, a soldier, a demagogue, not as a candidate for political

²³ See letter of Mme. Vadier and family from "Raymond," Aug. 17, 1829, in Galante Garrone, "Buonarroti e i Convenzionali," *Movimento Operaio*, V, 37.

office, a journalist or pamphleteer, not as a citizen, nor even as a French worker excluded from the "pays légal," not even as a spy or agent of a foreign power; but only as the *self*-appointed representative of a free-floating general will who was answerable only to posterity, as a man who believed he belonged to all ages but who had no identity in the present moment—who literally abandoned his children and his personal future, when he adopted all humanity. It was as a cosmopolitan outlaw, as an anonymous man of many aliases, of ambiguous nationality (was his real name Philippe or Filippo?), of uncertain employment and place of residence, who felt responsible only to some "higher law" revealed by his intuition of the will of the "people" and his divination of the historical process, that he undertook the secular redemption of mankind.

Because he was always sustained by his belief that during the First Republic, he had "seen the future, and it worked!" he became the prototype of the professional revolutionist who was to ply his trade "underground, in the dark, in the little hidden rooms out of sight of governments and policemen" eventually with fateful consequence to all of Western civilization. And thus does his life serve to demonstrate how the French Revolution truly opened a new career to all talents.

Bibliographical Essay

I. A NOTE ON THE VERDICT OF SOME RECENT HISTORIANS

The most striking aspect of the bibliography on Buonarroti has been suggested in the introduction and conclusion of this essay. For almost a century after his death—from the 1830's to the 1930's—even as the weeds grew around his tomb in Montmartre, so did relevant papers, letters, memoirs, dossiers, continue to pile up in archives and libraries without attracting much scholarly interest. The silence was briefly interrupted for a decade, from 1900 to 1910, when Georges Weill's two articles appeared along with Romano-Catania's Italian biography and Paul Robiquet's documentary French study. Thereafter the dust began to settle on the documents; save for a few obscure, little noted, special studies, silence reigned until the last two decades, when the great revival got under way. Today there is scarcely an issue of the *Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento* or of the *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* that does not contain a notice of some new articles on Buonarroti. Although no full-scale biography has yet appeared, one may soon be forthcoming when Pia Onnis completes her work. That the foundations for such a biography have been well laid in a surprisingly brief time is suggested by the fact that scholars are beginning to "discover" and republish the same documents.

How is one to account for this sudden mobilization of scholarly energy after so long a period of neglect? Various explanations have been offered. Pia Onnis, reviewing the matter for the *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* in 1950, traced the revival to the anti-fascist reaction which placed a new emphasis on the impact of the French Revolution and on the role of the Italian "jacobins" in connection with the Risorgimento—the fascist regime having

attempted to sever this connection and to play down the "progressive" foreign element in their interpretation of the Italian national awakening. There seems to be no question that the new interest in Buonarroti's career goes hand in hand with a new Italian interest in the French Revolution as shown particularly in the work of Alessandro Galante Garrone—who translated Lefebvre's *Quatre-Vingt-Neuf* in 1949 (*L'Ottantanove*, Turin, 1949) and Edgar Quinet's *La Révolution* in 1953 (*La Rivoluzione*, Turin, 1953)—and of his friend, Franco Venturi—whose study of Jaures, Mathiez, and Lefebvre draws attention to Buonarroti's historiographical contributions. But there had been no real boycott of Buonarroti during Mussolini's regime (if indeed one may refer to a boycott of a subject that had previously been ignored). According to Signor Saitta, an attempt was even made to treat Buonarroti as a fascist precursor by Donato Scioscioli in *Il Dramma del Risorgimento sulle vie dell'esilio*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1937). Although Ersilio Michel's special studies were published, somewhat obscurely, in a periodical devoted to Corsican history in 1929 and 1933, Signora Onnis' own substantial contributions appeared in the leading Italian historical journals during the fascist regime. Furthermore, in 1926, R. Soriga had already pointed to Buonarroti's contributions to the Risorgimento in his *L'Idea Nazionale e il Ceto dei "Patrioti" Avanti il Maggio, 1796*.

As the foregoing suggests, the chronology of the recent revival should be kept in mind before attempting to account for its development. Pia Onnis's two long scholarly articles appeared in 1937 and 1939. In the intervening year a Communist publishing house in Paris turned out a translation of a relatively low level study, now out of print, by Walter Haenisch, *La Vie et les Luites de Philippe Buonarroti*, tr. O. Blanc (Paris: Bureau d'Editions, 1938). In 1943, Delio Cantimori devoted two chapters of his book (which is cited below) on Italian utopians and reformers to Buonarroti. Three years later the revival got into full swing with the publication, by Einaudi, of two translations, one of Buonarroti's own apologia, *Congiura per l'Uguaglianza o di Babeuf*, tr. by Gastone Manacorda (Turin, 1946), and the other of Bernstein's polemical biography,

Filippo Buonarroti, tr. by Giuseppe Berti (Turin, 1946). The major works by Saitta and Galante Garrone and a spate of periodical articles by these and other authorities—some of which (by no means all) are mentioned below—appeared thereafter.

Along with chronology, the auspices under which this research appeared are also worth reviewing. Many of the recent articles have been published in the *Movimento Operaio* now edited by Saitta, earlier under the direction of an editorial board composed, among others, of Galante Garrone, Venturi, Manacorda, and Saitta. This periodical is issued under the auspices of the Biblioteca G. G. Feltrinelli in Milan, "one of the chief centers of the more orthodox wing of Marxist historians," according to a review article mentioned below by Charles Delzell, who notes that this research center also issues *Rinascita*, which is edited by Palmiro Togliatti, and *Società*, edited by Gastone Manacorda. Mr. Delzell also refers to two of the major figures in the Buonarroti revival, Armando Saitta and Delio Cantimori, as "Marxists" and to Alessandro Galante Garrone as a "non-Marxist." He does not note that the "Gramsci Prize" (named after the young intellectual who helped found the Italian Communist party in 1921 and died in 1937, after being imprisoned by the Fascists) was given to Galante Garrone's second book on Buonarroti, before it had been published. Nor does he note that Giuseppe Berti, who translated Bernstein's biography into Italian, was one of the directors of the "foreign center" of the P.C.I. during the Fascist regime.¹ He only observes that the sudden arousal of interest in Buonarroti is due "in part to the desire of contemporary socialists to trace their paternity."

Although Mr. Delzell's guarded terminology is unfortunately ambiguous (it would be more exact, for example, to characterize Galante Garrone as a non-Communist), one cannot help but sympathize with his attempt to avoid, by euphemism, becoming swamped in a morass of conflicting loyalties and shifting allegiances, overlaid

¹ See Aldo Garosci, "The Italian Communist Party," *Communism in Western Europe*, ed. Mario Einaudi (Ithaca, New York, 1951), p. 195. The French edition of Bernstein's book is dedicated "A mon ami, Guiseppe Berti, héritier de la tradition de Buonarroti."

by suspicion and innuendo. In matters of this kind, where specific factual information is difficult to obtain, academic caution is not only a tempting refuge, but a professionally sanctioned one. Yet when all is said and done, the term "orthodox Marxist" applied in a twentieth-century context, is as meaningless as the term "orthodox Christian" applied in a sixteenth-century context. It is unthinkable for an authority dealing with the Reformation to avoid the terms "Catholic" and "Protestant" when discussing bibliography although the danger of overlooking a conversion or of calling some obscure Calvinist historian a Lutheran is omnipresent. Despite the lack of more specific information than that given above, there is enough, in my opinion, to state bluntly that probably a most important factor—and hitherto an unmentioned one—contributing to the mobilization of scholarly energy around the figure of Buonarroti was the desire of the Italian Communist Party to produce a "native son" who could be as closely identified as Mazzini with the Risorgimento but whose position could be more easily adapted to the needs of the party line.²

That other factors have contributed to the revival goes without saying. Periodicals such as the *Movimento Operaio* and the *International Review of Social History* might be expected to take a lead in Buonarrotian research for the field naturally falls within their purview. Once interest was aroused, a variety of socialists, Marxists, Italian nationalists, Catholics interested in secular movements, and even nonsectarian historians interested in history would be attracted to the field. Because of the random variables involved, it is a mistake to press any point concerning intellectual interests too far. From his bibliography, for example, it is evident that J. L. Talmon became interested in Buonarroti at the time the Italian revival was under way, without having ever come into contact with it. It is quite probable that several Italian scholars now working in the field were independently motivated in a similar fashion. For, although interest in Buonarroti was dormant for a century, as long as the French Revolution and the Risorgimento continued to preoccupy

² This is most apparent in a review of Saitta's first volume by Gastone Manacorda in *Società* (1950), VI, 734-747 (see especially p. 743).

historians, the possibility of awakening this interest was always present; once aroused, the controversial nature of Buonarroti's career would inevitably set off a rapid-fire scholarly chain reaction.

It is then quite possible that such straws in the wind as the giving of the Gramsci prize, the patronage of the Biblioteca Feltrinelli, and the Berti and Manacorda translations simply represent an attempt of an interested party to exploit a reaction produced by other, more independent variables. One may only conclude that in dealing with Buonarroti's recent biographers, as in dealing with their subject, one is never entirely free of the problems associated with a conspiracy which chooses to mask itself, and one must always be on guard against the possibility of greatly exaggerating or seriously underestimating the impact of an efficient department of agitation and propaganda.

2. SURVEY OF BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following is a selective bibliography, which emphasizes material cited in the footnotes and which is organized around the topics considered in the preceding text. Thus, for the most part, it covers material directly related to Buonarroti's career that has not been absorbed in general historical treatments of the era in which he lived and that is available in this country. The few references cited below in connection with certain heavily cultivated historical fields, have been mentioned, even as they were consulted, only because of their special relevance for this study. They are not necessarily the most useful or authoritative works in these areas. Accordingly readers primarily concerned with such topics as the Illuminati, Babouvism, revolutionary historiography, French socialism, or the Risorgimento should consult the special bibliographies that are readily available elsewhere. Since 1957 is the terminal date for this survey, readers should, in any case, consult the periodicals mentioned below for notices of the more recent studies that will surely be forthcoming.

The most useful historiographical orientation for those who are interested in Buonarrotian research is provided by numerous review articles, which continue to appear with a frequency which testifies

to the presence of a rapidly developing field of historical enquiry. Among these to date, the most valuable are two Italian articles. One is a masterful survey by Pia Onnis, "Filippo Buonarroti, la Congiura di Babeuf e il Babuvismo," *Nuova Rivista Storica* (1952), XXXVI, 489-514, which covers almost everything that had been written on the subject and includes much original material as well. The other, by Giuseppe Talamo, "Studi Buonarrotiani," *Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento* (1955), XLII, 631-638, includes mention of many minor review articles; it is more recent but less illuminating than its predecessor. An earlier article by Pia Onnis, "Les Etudes Italiennes sur l'Histoire de la Révolution Française de 1940 à 1949," *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (1950), XXII, 358-361, along with several reviews of single works in the same journal by Jacques Godechot (1949), XXI, 374-376; (1953), XXV, 80-84, 345-347; by Georges Lefebvre (1950), XXII, 78-82; by Godechot and Lefebvre (1951), XXIII, 89-94; and finally Lefebvre's "Bulletin Historique: La Révolution et l'Empire (Période Révolutionnaire)," *Revue Historique* (1951), XXV, 80-84 have helped to keep French scholars abreast of new developments. Although Charles F. Delzell, "Italian Historical Scholarship: A Decade of Recovery and Development 1945-1955," *The Journal of Modern History* (1956), XXVIII, 374-388 touches only briefly on Buonarrotian research, he provides indispensable background information on the scholars responsible for it. A similar service is provided by Renzo de Felice, "Studi Recenti di Storia del Triennio Rivoluzionario in Italia (1796-1799)," *Società* (1955), XI, 498-513, who points to the role of Gramsci's *Quaderni del Carcere* in the current reinterpretation of the early years of the Risorgimento. Despite its seemingly apposite title, Aldo Garosci's *Pensiero Politico e Storiografia Moderna* (Pisa, 1954), contains no mention of Buonarroti, nor of Saitta, Cantimori, or Manacorda.

An excellent classified bibliography, compiled by Jean Dautry, is contained in the second volume of the 1957 French edition of the *Conspiration Pour l'Egalité*, mentioned below. Despite minor *lacunae* noted by Samuel Bernstein, "Buonarroti's Classic History of Babouvism," *Science and Society* (1957), XXI, 346-352, this biblio-

graphy is remarkably complete considering its brevity and includes recent Russian material. A more extensive bibliography, covering much background material with special emphasis on the secret societies and the Risorgimento may be found at the end of the second volume by Armando Saitta, *Filippo Buonarroti: Contributi Alla Storia Della Sua Vita e Del Suo Pensiero* (Rome, 1951), II, 248-294. Preceded by a list of the archives in Italy, France, and Switzerland consulted by the author, this bibliography, which includes periodical literature, is presented in the form of an alphabetical "Index of Authors"—an original and most useful device. No work in English is listed among the hundreds of titles given. There are few, if any, that should be. A brief bibliography is provided in the revised and expanded French edition of Samuel Bernstein's *Buonarroti, Grands Figures Hier et Aujourd'hui*, tr. by M. Gilles (Paris, 1949), but, like the work itself, it is already outdated.³

This French edition of Bernstein's work is the only book devoted to a general treatment of Buonarroti that is accessible to non-Italian readers.⁴ An excerpt from it, translated into Italian by Elsa Fubini, appeared under the apt title, "Buonarroti, Storico e teorico Comunista," in *Società* (1948), IV, 376-397. It is the product of considerable original research and, thanks to revisions and additions, represents a decided improvement over the earlier Italian version: *Filippo Buonarroti*, tr. and Pref. by G. Berti (Turin, 1946). But it is similarly flawed, in my opinion, by the author's attempt to draft Buonarroti into the service of the Third International. A briefer treatment, but a more reliable one despite fifty years of age, is

³ None of these bibliographies or review articles mention the chapter devoted to Buonarroti by Sergio Martinelli, *Ottocento Rivoluzionario Italiano, Dottrine Rivoluzionarie* (Milan, 1945). This relatively superficial treatment, accompanied by equally sketchy portraits of Carlo Pisacane and Mazzini, should be noted only for the sake of bibliographical completeness.

⁴ Pia Onnis in her review article of 1952 and Jean Dautry in his bibliography, both refer to the publication in New York in 1944, of an English language version of this biography—ostensibly a revised and augmented version of an earlier edition also published in New York in 1942, under the auspices of "Lo Stato Operaio." I have been unable to locate this version in Widener Library, the Library of Congress, or the New York Public Library. Mr. Bernstein, himself, has assured me that no English language edition of his book has ever been published.

Georges Weill's pioneering article "Philippe Buonarroti, 1761-1837," *Revue Historique* (1901), LXXVI, 241-275 which compresses a great deal of valuable information into a small space. It is also still a better balanced account than the much more recent notice by A. Martin, "Buonarroti," *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française*, Brun-Cabre, ed. by Prevost and D'Amat (Paris, 1955), pp. 673-674. Weill's other article, "Les Papiers de Buonarroti," *Revue Historique* (1905), LXXXVIII, 317-323 drew attention to important acquisitions by the Bibliothèque Nationale donated by the son of a former Babouvist and member of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits named Baudement (who appears variously as Bodman or Baudeman in books on Babouvism). Apparently, Baudement had planned to use these documents as a basis for writing a joint biography of Teste, d'Argenson, and Buonarroti but failed to carry out his project. Instead, these documents were utilized by a student of Aulard's, namely Paul Robiquet, *Buonarroti et la Secte des Egaux d'après des Documents Inédits* (Paris, 1910). This work reflects the anti-Robespierrist, staunchly republican viewpoint of Aulard's school. Although it has been attacked by Saitta as a tissue of errors filled with inaccurate citations and incorrect attributions, Robiquet's general treatment of Buonarroti provides a useful counterbalance to the more recent works by members of Mathiez' school. The documents published in the appendix are inaccurately transcribed, however, and the book is factually unreliable.

In English, a few pages have been devoted to Buonarroti's career by David Thomson, *The Babeuf Plot. The Making of a Republican Legend* (London, 1947), pp. 59-65 which contains an unfortunately misleading misprint—i.e. Paris instead of Pisa (p. 60)—and a brief bibliography (pp. 107-109); by Max Nomad, *Apostles of Revolution* (Boston, 1939), pp. 17-18; and by J. L. Talmon, *The Rise of Totalitarian Democracy* (Boston, 1952), pp. 175-178. The article by Arthur Müller Lehning, "Buonarroti and his International Secret Societies," *International Review of Social History* (1956), I, 112-140 not only provides the first major break in the wall of silence built up by English-speaking scholars, but is a substantial contribution in its own right. Lehning has fully exploited his major source—namely,

the memoirs of one of Buonarroti's agents, Joachim Paul de Prati, "An Autobiography Expressly Written for the Penny Satirist," *The Penny Satirist*, Nos. 8-126 (June 10, 1837-Sept. 14, 1839), which were published fourteen years after Prati had arrived in England following the discovery of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits. In tracking down the clues provided by Prati's retrospective testimony, Lehning has made good use of Saitta's work and has also uncovered some new material. Nowhere does he acknowledge Galante Garrone's previous recognition of the value of Prati's autobiography; nor does he follow some bibliographical leads given by Francovich (notably, P. Pedrotti, *Note Autobiografiche del Conspiratore Trentino Gioacchino Prati*, Rovereto, 1926).

Lehning's second article: "Buonarroti's Ideas on Communism and Dictatorship," *International Review of Social History* (1957), II, 266-287 helps to round out his interpretation of Buonarroti. In my opinion this interpretation is weakened by a failure to distinguish sufficiently between the ecumenical liberal spirit of the Enlightenment and the more sectarian Jacobin faith to which Buonarroti adhered. Many of the views expressed in the second article, moreover, are inconsistent with those expressed in the first one. There is also a tendency to take at face value Buonarroti's testimony concerning events that transpired thirty years before he wrote about them. As in the previous article, the work of the Italian authorities, other than Saitta, is neglected; at the same time there is evidence of careful original research. The footnotes to both articles contain valuable bibliographical data, much of it unavailable elsewhere. It is from Lehning, for example, that one may learn of Felix Delhasse's missing pseudonymous biography of Baudement (by "F. Laidaes") and that the present whereabouts of the documents loaned by Delhasse to Giuseppe Romano-Catania are now unknown.

Partly because of his utilization of these now missing documents, Romano-Catania's second, revised, edition of his Italian biography: *Filippo Buonarroti* (Milan, 1902), which also owed much to Weill's pioneering article, is a work of considerable importance. Like the earlier Italian tributes by Atto Vannucci, *I Martiri della Libertà Italiana dal 1794 al 1848* (Milan, 1887), 7th ed., II, chap. LX and

by Giovanni La Cecilia, "Filippo Buonarroti," *Panteon dei Martiri della Libertà Italiana*, ed. G. d'Amato (Turin, 1852), I, chap. XXI, Romano-Catania's work is eulogistic in tone. Unlike these earlier panegyrics, however, his work is substantial and contains much material, especially on the early phases of Buonarroti's career, that later authorities have merely duplicated—often without giving credit to this first book-length biography of Buonarroti. Nonetheless, Romano-Catania's book has been, for the most part, outdated by the recent work of contemporary Italian scholars.

Despite the relatively large output, there is surprisingly little duplication in this recent work—a fact which testifies to the depth and scope of the field. At the moment, both Armando Saitta's two volumes mentioned above, and Galante Garrone's two books: *Buonarroti e Babeuf* (Turin, 1948); *Filippo Buonarroti e i Rivoluzionari dell'Ottocento, 1828-1837* (Turin, 1951) are indispensable. For the most part these works complement each other, covering different phases of Buonarroti's career; thus Galante Garrone begins his second book in 1828, leaving the middle period to Saitta. Where they overlap—in such areas as Babouvism and the Risorgimento—there is frequent disagreement which results in a further increase in the already abundant discursive footnotes. This disagreement is amicable, however, pedantic rather than polemical in tone involving no fundamental clash of interpretations. Saitta's work—a massive compendium of notes and interpretive commentary on the sources published in his invaluable second volume—is both analytical and synthetic in approach, awkward in style, lacking clarity and unity. The ponderous display of erudition presents an unnecessarily formidable barrier to the reader but the closely knit arguments, despite the disorganized treatment and discontinuity of the work as a whole, are linked together and the reader is amply rewarded for the effort required. Galante Garrone's work is stylistically superior and his second book in particular represents an admirably organized, coherent synthesis of difficult material. The title of his first book is deceptive since it is a loose collection of heterogeneous essays some of which are devoted to revolutionary historiography and only incidentally to Buonarroti and Babeuf.

Throughout his work, due to his preoccupation with Buonarroti's colleagues and disciples, the background material is often brilliantly illuminated, but the outlines of the central figure are sometimes blurred.

On Buonarroti's early life, the best summary is by Arsenio Frugoni, "La Formazione dell'egalitario Filippo Buonarroti," *Humanitas* (May 1948), III, 470-482. Most of the material it contains, however, was already made available by Romano-Catania. Like the latter, Frugoni relies mainly on the three obituary notices—by the Brescian conspirator, Guglielmo Francinetti in *Le Radical* (Brussels), Sept. 24, 1837; by the radical French journalist B. Hauréau in *Le Journal du Peuple*, Oct. 1, 1837; and by Ulysse Trélat, in the *National*, Sept. 20, 1837—which remain the principal sources for knowledge of Buonarroti's youth. Since none of these friendly eulogists knew the young Buonarroti their accounts, which were based on his later oral reminiscences, are no more, nor less reliable than the sketch of Buonarroti's life given by Alexandre Andryane, *Souvenirs de Genève* (Brussels, 1839), II, 159-170 which was drawn from the same source. Andryane's account contains several major factual errors, however, and must be checked against other sources such as the *Précis Historique Concernant Philippe Buonarroti* which was printed in connection with Buonarroti's application for citizenship in 1793. Buonarroti's speeches before the Court at Vendôme in the *Débats du Procès Instruit par La Haute-Cour de Justice séant à Vendôme, contre Drouet, Baboeuf, et autres*, 4 vols (Paris, 1797) contain additional autobiographical material, thoroughly exploited by his recent biographers. As a separate, twenty-page pamphlet the *Discours Prononcé Par Buonarroti devant la Haute Cour de Justice* had been printed in 1797 and circulated during the Directory, along with a similar brochure: *Conclusions de la Défense Générale de Buonarroti devant la Haute Cour de Justice*. One guide to Buonarroti's family background containing clues that need further exploration is the genealogical survey by "F.S." (Ferdinando Sartini), "Buonarroti," *Enciclopedia Storico-Nobiliare Italiana, Famiglie Nobili e Titolate Viventi Riconosciute dal R. Governo D'Italia* (Milan, 1929), II, 207-208. The *Guide to the Buonarroti*

Gallery (Via Ghibellina No. 64) similarly points to a hitherto neglected storehouse of material on Buonarroti's immediate family that might be worth exploring.

The absence of any adequate account of the Tuscan reign of Archduke Peter Leopold, which would provide useful background material, was noted by Robert Joseph Kerner, *Bohemia in the Eighteenth Century—A Study in Political, Economic and Social History with Special Reference to the Reign of Leopold II 1790–1792* (New York, 1932). That this unfortunate situation has not changed in two decades is evident from the study by Franco Valsecchi, "Dispotismo Illuminato," *Questioni di Storia del Risorgimento e Dell' Unita D'Italia*, ed. by Ettore Rota (Milan, 1951), pp. 29–75 which contains a sparse bibliography of relevant titles. On this matter, the brief remarks of Albert Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution Française—I—Les Moeurs Politiques et les Traditions* (Paris, 1885), were more enlightening than the rambling, equally antiquated, article by Ferdinand Hirsch, "Leopold II als Grossherzog von Toskana," *Historische Zeitschrift* (1878), XL, 433–470, which is not mentioned by Valsecchi.

On the University of Pisa, aside from Romano-Catania's book, the two chapters devoted to Buonarroti by Delio Cantimori, *Utopisti e Riformatori Italiani, 1794–1847* (Florence, 1943), pp. 128–177 are particularly useful. They should be consulted in any case, since they view Buonarroti's career as a whole from a different perspective than any other general treatment. For the Corsican period, the works mentioned above all draw on Ersilio Michel, *Vicende di Filippo Buonarroti in Corsica, 1789–1794*, extract from *Archivio Storico di Corsica*, IX (Leghorn, 1933). The only complete copy of the *Giornale Patriottico* may be found in the Biblioteca Feltrinelli. Extracts from the first 32 issues of the Corsican journal, edited by Buonarroti under the pseudonym of "Abraham Levi Salomon," have, however, been republished. The "Giornale Patriottico de Ph. Buonarrotti [sic], 1791–1792," *Bulletin de la Société des Sciences Historiques et Naturelles de la Corse* (1919) XXXVI, 1–95; (1921), XLI, 96–268 contains a running commentary, in French, by A.

Ambrosi-Rossi, dealing, as does the journal, with day-to-day local political affairs.

A most useful article, summarizing the broader aspects of the Corsican political scene, has been provided by Christian Ambrosi, "Pascal Paoli et la Corse de 1789 à 1791," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* (1955), I, 161-185. Paul Robiquet's lecture on "Buonarroti: Une Émeute Cléricale à Bastia en Juin, 1791," *La Révolution Française* (1908), XLIV, 490-504, is useful as a factual narrative but misleading as an interpretation. It contains the insinuation, solely on the basis of the lenient treatment accorded him, that Buonarroti played the role of a double agent, and served the Tuscan government while posing as a zealous Jacobin. A contemporary document (to be found in Widener Library among the "Pamphlets Relating to Corsica, 1790-1814") reveals that in November, 1793, a Parisian tribunal had cleared Buonarroti of this same charge and had brought in a verdict against his accuser. This brochure is signed "Perdry" and bears the following title: *Au Nom de la République Française: Le Tribunal du Deuxième Arrondissement du Département de Paris a rendu le Jugement suivant: entre le citoyen Philippe Buonarroti, natif du Toscane . . . demandeur . . . et le citoyen Constantini, natif du Département de Corse . . . défendeur* ("Enrégistré à Paris, le 9 Frimaire, l'an 2nd de la République,") 13 pp. Dautry has included this brochure in his bibliography along with a previous pamphlet by Constantini which provoked Buonarroti's polemic: *La Conjuration de Corse entièrement dévoilée par Philippe Buonarroti, citoyen français, contenant la réfutation complète du livre publié par Constantini . . . etc.* (Paris, 1793), 54 pp.

Many other relevant sources and references are cited by Galante Garrone in *Buonarroti e Babeuf*, pp. 52-67. Georges Lefebvre's paper "Les Origines du Communisme de Babeuf," *IX^e Congrès International des Sciences Historiques* (1950), I, 561-571 reprinted in his *Études Sur la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1954), pp. 304-314 should also be consulted although it is less relevant to Buonarroti. A recent article by David L. Dowd, "Les Missions de Philippe Buonarroti en Corse," *Annales Historiques de la Révolution*

Française (1956), XXVIII, 400-407 is an itinerary of Buonarroti's voyages not a discussion of their significance.

The two articles by Pia Onnis, "Filippo Buonarroti e i Patrioti Italiana del 1794 al 1796," *Rivista Storica Italiana* (1937), II, 38-65; "Filippo Buonarroti, Commissario Rivoluzionario a Oneglia nel 1794-95," *Nuova Rivista Storica* (1939), XXIII, 353-379, 477-500 are acknowledged by all the above authorities as the definitive work on this aspect of Buonarroti's career. These indispensable studies are summarized in French by Jacques Godechot, Review Article, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (1949), XXI, 374-376. Godechot has also provided useful background material in his *Les Commissaires aux Armées sous le Directoire* (Paris, 1941), I, 254-262 and has contributed two important special studies relating to Buonarroti's activities in 1796: "Le Babouvisme et L'Unité Italienne (1796-1799)," *Revue des Etudes Italiennes* (1938), II, 259-283 and "Unità Batava e Unità Italiana all'epoca dell' Direttorio," *Archivio Storico Italiano* (Florence, 1955), 335-336. In the first of these two articles, Godechot answers several questions raised many years before by G. Pariset, "Babouvisme et Maçonnerie," *Mélanges Offerts à M. Charles Andler par ses Amis et Ses Elèves* (Strasbourg, 1924), pp. 269-276 who hazarded the opinion that the conspiratorial aspects of Babouvism were merely a figment of Buonarroti's imagination. Besides furnishing, in his second volume, most of the documents which are essential to an understanding of Buonarroti's Italian policy in 1796, Saitta has also contributed two special studies: "Filippo Buonarroti e la Municipalità Provvisoria di Alba," *Belfagor* (1948), III, 587-596; "Il Robespierrismo di Filippo Buonarroti e le Premesse dell'Unità Italiana," *Belfagor* (1955), X, 258-270. This second article, based on a lecture given at the University of Pisa, agrees on the whole, with the opinions expressed in my essay and underlines the basic dissimilarity between Buonarroti and Babeuf.

On the more familiar domestic aspects of the Babouvist conspiracy, the literature is too vast to be covered here and relevant bibliography can be easily obtained by consulting the references given by almost any of the authorities that have already been cited. Maurice Dom-

manget, who has contributed many studies on this subject, has also provided a good bibliography in his *Pages Choisies de Babeuf* (Paris, 1935). On the aftermath, Paul Robiquet, "Les Déportés Babouvistes au Fort National," *La Révolution Française* (1912), XXXI, 481-509 has been greatly supplemented but not altogether supplanted by the documents and commentary in Saitta's first volume. The background for Buonarroti's political agitation as a prisoner toward the end of the Directory is provided by many authorities. A. Aulard, "Les Derniers Jacobins," *Etudes et Leçons sur la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1913), VII, 84-113; A. Meynier, *Les Coups d'Etat du Directoire* (Paris, 1932), III, 12-163; G. Pariset, *La Révolution 1792-1799*, Histoire de la France Contemporaine, ed. Lavis (Paris, 1920), II, 308-309 contain particularly relevant material.

Some light on Buonarroti's disorderly personal life has been cast by Saitta and by Alessandro Natta, "La Compagna di Filippo Buonarroti," *Movimento Operaio* (1955), VII, 121-123. As has been noted, this periodical is now edited by Saitta. As a consequence the *Movimento Operaio* has become a major outlet for Buonarrotian research. Buonarroti's impact on the radical movement in Switzerland during his stay in that country is handled, somewhat incautiously, by Maurice Pianzola, "Filippo Buonarroti in Svizzera," *Movimento Operaio* (1955), VII, 123-134 who notes Buonarroti's close friendship with Mazzini's Swiss enemy, Jacques Fazy. The same author has clarified the date of Buonarroti's departure from Switzerland in "La Mystérieuse Expulsion de Philippe Buonarroti," *Cahiers Internationaux* (1954), VI, 53-66. According to Pia Onnis' review article of 1952, the "mystery" had previously been resolved by Mario Battistini, "Il Centenario di Filippo Buonarroti," *Camicia Rossa* (1937), pp. 8-9. Because of the absence of a definitive biography, however, it is not unusual to find different authorities rediscovering the same material on Buonarroti from different archives. Such duplication of work is almost inevitable because so many findings have been published in obscure, out of print collections and periodicals. On the other hand, as Jean Dautry notes, "it is almost certain that all the documents relating to Buonarroti which are preserved in the *Archives Nationales* and the *Archives du Ministère de la Guerre*

have not been exploited." This statement surely applies also to scattered archives in various European cities, including those listed by Saitta.

On the activities which led to Buonarroti's expulsion, Andryane's memoirs (both those cited above and his *Mémoires d'un Prisonnier d'Etat au Spielberg*, Paris, 1837-38) are a most valuable source. They must be handled cautiously, however, as the author always sacrifices factual accuracy for literary effect. Many other similarly unreliable sources are cited by both Saitta and Lehning who have explored the ramifications of the Sublime Maîtres Parfaits in detail revealing gaps and inconsistencies than can be remedied only by intensive biographical research, along the lines followed by Léonce Pingaud in *La Jeunesse de Charles Nodier—Les Philadelphes* (Paris, 1919). This admirable work shows that one cannot afford to ignore the inventive faculties of the romantic imagination when dealing with the testimony of early nineteenth-century conspirators in an age when hoaxes and forgeries proliferated and fiction masqueraded as factual autobiography. By contrast, Carlo Francovich in his treatment of "Gli Illuminati di Weishaupt e l'idea egualitaria in alcune società segrete del Risorgimento," *Movimento Operaio* (1952), IV, 553-598 has failed to take into account the myth-making proclivities of his witnesses. Although he refers to the classic study by R. Le Forestier, *Les Illuminés de Bavière et la Franc-Maçonnerie Allemande* (Paris, 1914), Francovich seems to be unaware of Le Forestier's many cogent arguments deflating the conspiratorial myth. These arguments have been summarized by Daniel Mornet, *Les Origines Intellectuelles de la Révolution Française*, 4th ed. (Paris, 1947), who—like Georges Lefebvre, *La Révolution Française*, rev. ed. (Paris, 1951) p. 192—accepts Le Forestier's thesis in its entirety.

An extensive polemical literature has been produced by those who disagree with Le Forestier. Among more recent works, readily available in English, those of Mrs. Nesta Webster are typical. Her *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* (London, 1924) is particularly relevant to Buonarroti. Although written in a popular, semi-hysterical vein which contrasts with Francovich's dispassionate tone,

Mrs. Webster's book covers much of the same ground as Franco-vich's scholarly article and similarly takes at face value the "revelations" of Abbé Barruel, *Mémoires Pour Servir à l'Histoire du Jacobinisme*, 4 vols. (London, 1797), and Witt-Doering, *Les Sociétés Secrètes de France et d'Italie* (Paris, 1830). Although all documentary evidence in this area is suspect, its sheer weight is too formidable to be lightly dismissed. Certainly as a result of Francovich's investigation of Italian masonic literature, as well as of the other recent work on Buonarroti and on the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits, Le Forestier's thesis should be re-examined. Similarly, other earlier studies such as A. Calmette, "Les Carbonari en France sous la Restauration (1821-1830)," *La Révolution de 1848* (1913-14) X, 52-73, 117-137, 214-220 also need to be rewritten in order to provide the groundwork for a much needed general treatment of the radical resistance movements throughout Europe during the eras of Napoleon and Metternich.

In contrast with the sparse objective information on Buonarroti's conspiratorial accomplices during the Empire and the Restoration, there is ample data on the surviving administrators of the First Republic with whom he associated during his six years in Brussels. Eugene Welvert, *Lendemain Révolutionnaires: Les Régicides* (Paris, 1907); A. Kuscinski, "Les Conventionnels en Exil," *La Révolution Française* (1891), XX, 122-144, and his *Dictionnaire des Conventionnels* (Paris, 1919); Albert Tournier, *Vadier Président du Comité de Sûreté Générale sous la Terreur* (Paris, 1869); A. Saint-Ferréol, *Les Proscrits Français en Belgique* (Brussels, 1870), are among the more valuable of the many works dealing with this subject and provide an adequate introduction to the source material available. Galante Garrone's article, "Filippo Buonarroti e i Convenzionali in Esilio (Dalle Carte Inedite della Famiglia Vadier)," *Movimento Operaio* (1953), V, 3-63 contains both more and less than is suggested by the title. It consists of an introduction to an unedited correspondence between Buonarroti and the Vadier family (contained in the Musée de l'Histoire at Montreuil) which is published in an appendix. This appendix also contains a review of Buonarroti's book from the *Globe* of 1829. Since Mme Vadier's daughter and

son-in-law were living in France, both the introduction and correspondence focus on the French political scene as viewed by Buonarroti from Brussels. This correspondence has also been summarized for French readers by Jacques Godechot, "Les Papiers de Vadier," *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (1953), XXV, 345-347. Although this correspondence supplements it does not supplant the sources published in Saitta's second volume which remain indispensable for an understanding of Buonarroti's relations with his fellow exiles. An excerpt from these sources had previously been used by Albert Mathiez, "Le rôle de Barère et de Vadier au 9 Thermidor, jugé par Buonarroti," *Annales Révolutionnaires* (1911), VI, 96-102.

Ample material, both primary and secondary, is available for the much needed comprehensive study of the origins and early phases of the great historiographical debate on the Revolution and on the surviving factions which engendered it. Paul Coutant's pious tribute, under the pseudonym of "Stéfane-Pol," *Autour de Robespierre: Le Conventionnel Lebas, d'Après des Documents Inédits et les Mémoires de sa Veuve* (Paris, 1901), contains a wealth of information on the role of the Duplay-Lebas dynasty in the rehabilitation of Robespierre and the retrospective incorporation of Buonarroti into the most intimate Robespierrist circles. Among the many works contributing to Robespierre's rehabilitation, the following are mentioned because of their special relevance to the "Buonarrotian orbit": Louis Blanc, *Histoire de la Révolution Française*, 12 vols. (Paris, 1847-1862); P.-J.-B. Buchez and P.-C. Roux, *Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution Française*, 40 vols. (Paris, 1834-1838); Etienne Cabet, *Histoire Populaire de la Révolution Française de 1789 à 1830*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1838); *Oeuvres de Maximilien Robespierre*, ed. by Albert Laponneraye, 2 vols. (Paris, 1832), (third ed., 1840, 3 vols.); B. Hauréau, *La Montagne: Notices Historiques et Philosophiques sur les Principaux Membres de la Montagne*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1834; *Mémoires de René Levasseur (de la Sarthe) Ex-Conventionnel*, ed. by Achille Roche, 4 vols. (Paris, 1829-1831); *Papiers Inédits Trouvés Chez Robespierre, Saint-Just, Payan, etc., Supprimés ou omis par Courtois*, Collection des Mémoires Relatifs à la Révolution

Française—I, ed. by Berville and Barrière (Paris, 1828). Too often American scholars have discussed these works and others of the same period, without considering the relationship of their editors, publishers, and authors to Buonarroti's department of agitation and propaganda. Galante Garrone's essay "L'Apologia del Terrore" (which forms the first part of his *Buonarroti e Babeuf*) and his article "I Sansimoniani e la Storia della Rivoluzione Francese," *Rivista Storica Italiana* (1949), LXI, 351-378 (which is almost entirely devoted to a summary and an analysis of Paul Mathieu Laurent's pseudonyms *Réfutation de l'Histoire de France de l'Abbé de Montgaillard*, by "Uranelt de Leuze," Paris, 1828) have, along with Saitta's work, cast new light on Buonarroti's contribution to the great debate.

In this connection, Buonarroti's critical role as a source of inspiration for Albert Mathiez' work as a whole, needs to be studied, in the light of Mathiez' own articles, such as "La Politique de Robespierre et le 9 Thermidor Expliqués par Buonarroti," *Annales Révolutionnaires* (1910) III, 481-513; of the material published by Saitta on Buonarroti's documentation of parliamentary corruption during the Terror; and of Galante Garrone's essays. Although he barely scratches the surface of this problem, Franco Venturi's acknowledgment of Buonarroti's influence on Mathiez' historiography in his important study, *Jean Jaures e Altri Storici della Rivoluzione Francese* (Turin, 1948), is exceptional. Both Frances Acomb, "Albert Mathiez (1874-1932)," *Some Historians of Modern Europe*, ed. by Bernadotte E. Schmidt (Chicago, 1943), 306-324 and Paul Farmer, *France Reviews Its Revolutionary Origins* (New York, 1944), follow the example set by Georges Lefebvre, "L'Oeuvre Historique d'Albert Mathiez," *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (1932), IX, 193-210 and account for Mathiez' orientation in terms of current events during the Third Republic, without considering the tradition which shaped his reaction to those events and which Buonarroti had helped to formulate.

Two versions of Buonarroti's famous book were used for my essay—the original Brussels edition: *Conspiration Pour l'Egalité dite de Babeuf, suivie du Procès auquel elle donna lieu, et des*

Pièces Justificatives, 2 vols. in 1 (Brussels: Librairie Romantique, 1828), and, for the citations—the English translation by Bronterre O'Brien, *Buonarroti's History of Babeuf's Conspiracy for Equality with the Author's Reflections on the Causes and Character of the French Revolution and his Estimate of the Leading Men and Events of that Epoch*, tr. by "Bronterre," 2 vols. in 1 (London: Hetherington, 1836). The publisher of the original Brussels edition was a French librarian residing in Brussels, named Feuillet Dumas, according to Lehning. Along with Galante Garrone, the latter has successfully demolished the persistent error that an English translation appeared in 1828. This error has been traced to a misinterpreted statement of Barère's referring to the O'Brien translation of 1836. Lehning also somewhat confusingly refers to a "reissue" of the Brussels edition under a "new title" in London in 1828, although he does not cite this title and maintains that no English publisher could be found for the work.

The full list of all the editions of Buonarroti's book is given, with additional notes, by Pia Onnis in her previously cited review article of 1952 and by Jean Dautry, in his bibliography to the 1957 French edition. (In the following account, when the full title of the original Brussels edition reappears it has been abbreviated to *Conspiration Pour l'Egalité*, etc.). The first French edition was identical with the original one published two years before: *Conspiration Pour L'Egalité*, etc., 2 vols. in 1 (Paris: Baudouin Frères, 1830). In 1842 and in 1849 a similar "extract" of 108 pages appeared under different titles and different auspices: *Système Politique et Social des Egaux, Extrait du Livre de Philippe Buonarroti* (Paris: "Au Bureau du Journal 'La Fraternité,'" 1842); *Conspiration Pour L'Egalité*, etc. (Paris: "Au Bureau de la 'Propagande Démocratique et Sociale,'" 1849). In 1850 a longer abridged edition was published by a member of the "Egalitaires"—a secret society of the 1840's composed of disciples of Sylvain Maréchal—with an introduction which traced the history of earlier editions and referred to an English edition of 1828: *Histoire de la Conspiration Pour l'Egalité*, etc. (Paris: Charavay, jeune, 1850). In 1869 an abridged version was edited by Arthur Ranc for his collection of "great political trials": *Babeuf et la*

Conjuration des Egaux, Pref. and Notes by Arthur Ranc, Les Grands Procès Politiques—No. 2 (Paris: Le Chevalier, 1869).

After well over a century, the full length, two volume work has been made available again, in its original form. The *Conspiration pour l'Egalité, etc.*, pref. by Georges Lefebvre, 2 vols (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1957), has been published in a collection entitled "Les Classiques du Peuple." Prepared under the direction of Robert Brecy and Albert Soboul, these two volumes faithfully reproduce the text and format of the original Brussels edition. The editors have added a letter from Buonarroti to O'Brien concerning the English translation and a "key to the Anagrams" (which had masked the names of the conspirators in the original text)—both published in O'Brien's translation of 1836; a table of contents, Lefebvre's preface, and Dautry's bibliography. This should be the standard edition for a long time to come.

Aside from the English translation by O'Brien, several foreign translations have been published—all in the present century. Marx and Engels' plan for a German edition finally came to fruition with *Babeuf und die Verschwörung für die Gleichheit*, tr. and introd. by Anna and Wilhelm Blos (Stuttgart: International Bibliothek, 1909). A Russian translation of 1923 by K. Gorbach: *G. Babeuf i Zagovor Ravnykh*, ed. and introd. by Sviatlowsky, (Moscow-Petrograd, 1923), based on Ranc's abridgement, has now been superseded by an unabridged translation: *Zagovor vo Imia Revenstva*, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1948), containing illustrations of Babeuf, Sylvain Maréchal and Buonarroti—the latter portrayed in the Farcy lithograph. The Italian translation by Gastone Manacorda: *Congiura per l'Uguaglianza o di Babeuf* (Turin, 1946), contains an introduction by the translator which portrays the book as "the first class interpretation of the Revolution."

Despite its "popular" style, a more careful analysis of Buonarroti's version of the "good society" is given in Alexander Grey's *The Socialist Tradition: Moses to Lenin*, rev. ed. (London, 1947), than in the more scholarly surveys such as Elie Halévy, *Histoire du Socialisme Européen, Rédigée d'après des notes de cours par un groupe d'amis et d'élèves* (Paris, 1948), and Maxime Leroy, *Histoire des*

Idées Sociales en France-II-De Babeuf à Tocqueville (Paris, 1950); which tend, as do other similar works, to treat Buonarroti as Babeuf's faithful scribe and to glance over those portions of the book where the author departs from the role of a chronicler. Full recognition of the intrinsic significance of Buonarroti's *Conspiration pour l'Egalité* is given by J. L. Talmon in his previously cited controversial book which has been unfavorably reviewed in two separate French scholarly journals by Georges Lefebvre, review articles, *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (1953), XXV, 182-184 and *Revue Historique* (1954), CCXI, 144-146. These reviews raise a question as to the advisability of academic monopoly even when granted to a great historian. The favorable Anglo-American reviews: one by Crane Brinton, *The New York Times Book Review*, May 30, 1952, the other, "Revolution or Balance," *The Times Literary Supplement*, May 30, 1952, pp. 353-354 suggest that different national viewpoints are involved. But Lefebvre himself (*pace Quatre-Vingt-Neuf* and the masterful revised *La Révolution Française*) represents only one side of the great debate that still divides his nation; while Talmon's work (like Karl Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies* which it supplements) has been unfavorably regarded by some American scholars who, like Lefebvre, argue persuasively against "genealogies of ideas." See George Fischer, Review Article, *The Journal of Modern History* (March 1956), XXVIII, 85; C. J. Friedrich, "The Nature of Totalitarianism," *Totalitarianism: Proceedings of a Conference held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, March 1953 (Cambridge, Mass., 1954), pp. 47-60.

Buonarroti's activities as a cosmopolitan conspirator after the dissolution of the Sublimes Maîtres Parfaits have been extensively explored in Galante Garrone's second book, which is devoted to this subject and contains many suggestions for further research as well as bibliographical guidance in its footnotes; in Saitta's two volumes with their indispensable documentation and bibliography; and in Lehning's article. Special studies, largely incorporated in the foregoing works, are M. Battistini, *Filippo Buonarroti nel Belgio e le sue Relazione con Louis De Potter* (Leghorn, 1931); Carlo Franco-

vich, "Filippo Buonarroti e la Società dei 'Veri Italiani,'" *Il Ponte* (1951), 136-145; 261-269; F. Rude, "La Première Expédition de Savoie (Fevrier, 1831)," *Revue Historique* (1940), CLIX, 413-443. The one recent English work in this field, E. E. Y. Hales, *Mazzini and the Secret Societies: The Making of a Myth* (London, 1956), which deals with relevant material and concentrates on the period before 1837, is disappointing in its treatment of Buonarroti, who is mentioned only occasionally in the narrative by a few scattered references based on a casual acquaintance with portions of Galante Garrone's second book. This field is developing so rapidly that a review like Walter Maturi's "Partiti Politici e correnti di Pensiero del Risorgimento," *Questioni di Storia del Risorgimento e Dell' Unità D'Italia*, ed. E. Rota (Milan, 1951), pp. 349-437, which incorporated much of the new material on Buonarroti, has already become outdated. The profusion of post-war scholarly Italian periodicals containing relevant studies is bewildering and makes it difficult to keep up with new developments in this area.

Once again, although the bibliography on the Risorgimento and Mazzini is embarrassingly rich, the lack of biographical and monographic literature on the radical underground in Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, etc. is marked and reliance on unreliable testimony accordingly great. Until more factual information on the separate careers of Buonarroti's various accomplices has been made available, this phase of his life will continue to give rise to wild conjecture. Here, Galante Garrone has set a most admirable example for future work. By persisting in the difficult task of tracking down the available sources in several instances, and by interpreting them with proper caution, he has begun to correct the inflated impression of Buonarroti's influence given by such scholars as Saitta, Battistini, and Bernstein who have exaggerated the consequences of Buonarroti's close association with men like Claudio Linati and Felix Lepelletier. It seems likely that more work along these lines would result in a further deflation of the importance of Buonarroti's conspiratorial activities.

Despite frequent appeals from interested scholars, no one has yet studied the relations between the continental radical movement and

the Chartist movement across the Channel. The critical figure of Bronterre O'Brien still awaits an adequate biography. The revealing titles of O'Brien's abortive eulogies to Robespierre may be found in the useful chronology of Robespierrist historiography given by J. M. Thomson, *Robespierre*, 2 vols. (New York, 1936), I, xix-liv. They are also noted by G. D. H. Cole in his chapter on O'Brien in *Chartist Portraits* (London, 1941), pp. 239-267. As the author of a book on Babeuf that O'Brien translated, Buonarroti is casually mentioned and his name misspelled by Cole.

With respect to another aspect of English radicalism, Buonarroti's interest in Robert Owen's work has received some attention. The favourable account of Owen's social experiments in the *Conspiration* has been cited, from O'Brien's translation, under a chapter heading in S. Maccoby's *English Radicalism 1796-1832: From Paine to Cobbett* (London, 1955). There is no mention of Buonarroti however in the text of this volume nor in its chronological successor. Despite his more obvious bearing on the subject of these volumes, O'Brien himself barely appears in the narrative. In connection with Owen, the work of Galante Garrone and Saitta have greatly supplemented Albert Mathiez's article, "Babeuf et Robert Owen Comparés et Défendus par Buonarroti," *La Révolution de 1848* (1910), VII, 233-239. To understand the very different political orientation of English and French radicals during the nineteenth century, one should refer not only to the standard works such as Elie Halévy's *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism*, tr. by M. Morris (New York, 1949), but also to the important, relatively neglected, study by Frances Acomb, *Anglophobia in France 1763-1789: An Essay in the History of Constitutionalism and Nationalism* (Durham, North Carolina, 1950) which provides essential background material on the origins of the gulf that Buonarroti helped to widen.

The basic works on the republican movement in France before 1837 are Gabriel Perreux, *Au Temps des Sociétés Secrètes: La Propagande Républicaine au Début de la Monarchie de Juillet (1832-1835)* (Paris, 1931) and I. Tchernoff, *Le Parti Républicain sous la Monarchie de Juillet, Formation et Evolution de la Doctrine Républicaine* (Paris, 1901). Both provide indispensable background

material. All scholars in this field are heavily indebted to Georges Weill's remarkable *Histoire du Parti Républicain en France, 1814-1870* (rev. ed., Paris, 1928), where the author has surveyed a fairly large period in the text while compressing an extraordinary amount of special biographical and bibliographical data, based on original research, in the footnotes. Compared with these works, various English surveys, of which the most recent is by John Plamenatz, *The Revolutionary Movement in France 1815-1871* (London, 1952), are superficial and unsatisfactory. The basic French works also include material on the egalitarian as well as the republican movement during the early years of the Orleanist regime and are, indeed, particularly useful in this connection because of their special emphasis on political action.

Although there are countless special works devoted to the early phases of nineteenth century French socialism, most of these studies—like Eugène Fournière's *Les Théories Socialistes au XIX^e Siècle: de Babeuf à Proudhon* (Paris, 1904)—tend to ignore the field of propaganda and agitation and are devoted instead to a chronological survey of the ideas of socialist philosophers like Fourier and Saint-Simon. Consequently, neo-Babouvism, which found expression even in the 1830's in social action and popular journalism, tends to be neglected save for the later period of the 1840's when it is considered in conjunction with the work of men like Blanqui and Barbès and with the heavily saturated subject of the Revolution of 1848. David Thomson's previously cited work on the Babeuf Plot was written to fill this gap but unfortunately is so slight that the works of Perreux and Weill are still more useful. In short, a new study along the lines of Georges Sencier's antiquated *Le Babouvisme après Babeuf: Sociétés Secrètes et Conspirations Communistes, 1830-1848* (Paris, 1912), which is omitted from Thomson's bibliography, needs to be written.

Apart from these works, the wealth of published source material and secondary studies which is available in Widener Library alone, on radical opinion and social action in Bourbon and Orleanist France, is indicated by the classified bibliography to my unpublished doctoral dissertation: *The Evolution of the Jacobin Tradition in*

France: The Survival and Revival of the Ethos of 1793 under the Bourbon and Orleanist Regimes (Radcliffe College, 1951). Much of this material, involving "belles lettres," memoirs, biographies, autobiographies, histories, unofficial and official accounts of Chamber debates and political trials, journals, collections of sources and separate unedited pamphlets and brochures, is relevant to Chapter 6 of this essay—too much, in fact, to be adequately discussed here. An instance of the distortion resulting from failure to relate Buonarroti to this general background is provided by the article by Madeleine Rousseau, "Filippo Buonarroti et les Artistes Français," *Revue des Etudes Italiennes* (1938), III, 159-169 which should be read in conjunction with other studies, such as Henry Jouin's *David D'Angers: Sa Vie, Son Oeuvre, Ses Ecrits, Ses Contemporains*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1878) and Henri Focillon, "L'Art et la Révolution," *La Révolution de 1789 et la Pensée Moderne* (Paris, 1940), pp. 33-43. Similarly, the tendency of Buonarroti's biographers to oversimplify the crosscurrents within the republican ranks during the 1830's, to class Raspail, for example, with the men of the *National* and to overlook the fact that a man of the *National* like Armand Carrel belonged to the *école conventionnel* can be counteracted only with reference to various special works (like Mathiez' article, "F.—V. Raspail chez Albertine Marat," *Annales Révolutionnaires*, 1911, VI, 660-666 and the *Oeuvres Politiques et Littéraires d'Armand Carrel*, ed. by Littré and Paulin, Paris, 1857-59, 4 vols.), and above all to the host of articles published in periodicals like *La Révolution de 1848*.

The bibliography at the end of Weill's survey includes much of this indispensable background material while Saitta has published and carefully annotated the most important documents produced by Buonarroti's propaganda machine. Among the several unedited, separately printed pamphlets—that are contained in Widener Library and that are not mentioned elsewhere nor included in useful collections like *Les Murailles Révolutionnaires Depuis Février 1848 jusqu'à ce Jour*, ed. by A. Delvau (Paris, 1851), I (which, despite its title, is relevant to the period before 1848)—one was used especially for this essay. *L'Homme du Peuple devant une Cour d'Assise*, by

"Le Citoyen Vielbanc" (Paris: "chez Adolphe Rion," 1833) bears all the earmarks of Buonarrotian propaganda. It is ostensibly an undelivered speech by a self-styled "prolétaire" who expected to be prosecuted in connection with the trial of the members of the Société des Droits de l'Homme. A citation from an unofficial account of this trial *Procès des Vingt-Sept ou de la Société des Droits de l'Homme et des Elèves de l'Ecole Polytechnique*, etc. (Paris: "Publication du Populaire #16," 1834) was also used.

Apart from the documents provided by Saitta, probably the most important single source utilized in various ways for Chapter 6 of this essay, is a multi-volumed collection of essays by most of the prominent figures in the republican movement: *Paris Révolutionnaire*, ed. and introd. by Godefroy Cavaignac, 4 vols. (Paris, 1834-1838). Buonarroti's name appears on the list of the original sponsors of this collection which is introduced by an article on revolutionary tactics revealing his influence: Cavaignac, "La Force Révolutionnaire," I, vii-lxxxiv. There is adequate biographical material on most of the authors of these essays who were to become prominent in 1848, and also on such celebrated noncontributors as Barbès, Blanqui, Louis Blanc, Martin Bernard, and Etienne Cabet. In this connection, mention should be made of the extensive discussion of Buonarroti's influence by Jules Prudhommeaux, *Icarie et son Fondateur, Etienne Cabet* (Paris, 1907), which also contains hard-to-find information on d'Argenson and Teste. On the other hand, a recent study by Alan B. Spitzer, *The Revolutionary Theories of Louis Auguste Blanqui*, Columbia Studies in the Social Sciences #94 (New York, 1957), disappointingly slides over the problem of Buonarroti's relationship to Blanqui with a few question-begging remarks (pp. 126-129).

Biographical data is sorely needed on many young radical disciples of Buonarroti such as Laponneraye, Lebon, Vignerte, Hauréau, Roche, and Gigault. The thin and unsubstantial sections devoted to these figures by Galante Garrone in his second book underscore this need. By contrast, illuminating biographical data, along with specific and detailed evidence concerning Buonarroti's influence on an obscure middle aged provincial republican, Jean Jacques Delorme

of Saint-Aignon, has been provided by R. Bouis, "Filippo Buonarroti nei Ricordi di un democratico Francese," *Movimento Operaio* (1955), VII, 887-918. This article, undertaken at the request of Armando Saitta, consists of relevant excerpts from Delorme's memoirs, written in 1852-53, and his correspondence with Buonarroti (1831-37) cited in the original French interspersed with Bouis' commentary, which is in Italian. A previous note by Bouis, "Quelques Lignes de Buonarroti relatives à Jullien de Paris," *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (1954), XXVI, 75, consists merely of a brief excerpt from one of Buonarroti's letters to Delorme and is also contained in the longer article (p. 912).

As for Buonarroti's two closest associates—despite their obvious role in the resistance to the Orleanist regime, Charles Teste has been almost entirely ignored and Voyer d'Argenson barely noticed by the authorities, as is suggested by the sparse references given by M. Prevost, "D'Argenson," *Dictionnaire de Biographie Française—III—Antoine—Aubermesnil* (Paris, 1939), pp. 543-546. This notice significantly contains no mention at all of Buonarroti despite the evidence supplied by Louis Blanc, *The History of Ten Years 1830-1840*, tr. anon., 2 vols. (London, 1844-45), and by d'Argenson's secretary—Henri Bonnais, *Discours Prononcé sur la Tombe de Voyer d'Argenson le 4 Août par son Ancien Secrétaire* (Paris, 1842). Here again, by taking advantage of the most important source, *Discours et Opinions de Voyer d'Argenson, Précédés d'une Notice Biographique*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1845), edited anonymously by d'Argenson's son, the indefatigable Georges Weill has contributed an important pioneering article: "D'Argenson et la Question Sociale," *International Review of Social History* (1939), IV, 161-170.

It seems appropriate to end this bibliography with a mention of Buonarroti's posthumously published *Observations sur Maximilien Robespierre*, introd. by Charles Vellay, Chalon-sur-Saône, 1912 (transcript from *La Fraternité*, Sept., 1842, No. 17) which first appeared in *Le Radical* (Brussels) in 1837, preceded by a note by Felix Delhasse. These *Observations* were probably written in 1833 and circulated among Buonarroti's friends before they were published. Bronterre O'Brien was sent a copy in 1836 which he trans-

lated and included in the first volume of his *Life and Character of Maximilian Robespierre*. After appearing in *Le Radical* and in *La Fraternité*, the *Observations* were republished in *La Belgique Démocratique* (Jan. 1851), #9. The 1912 version was published under the auspices of the Société Robespierre which had previously offered excerpts from it: "Robespierre jugé par Philippe Buonarroti," *Bulletin de la Société Robespierre* (Oct.-Dec. 1911) I, 21-23.

According to its first bulletin, this Society was "founded in 1832" under the auspices of Buonarroti and the Société des Droits de l'Homme and was merely "reorganized" in 1911. Its more immediate origins may be found in the failure of the Comité du Monument Robespierre (which had been formed in 1908 and dissolved in 1910) to obtain its objective. Although by 1914, it had only forty-four members and a deficit, historians cannot afford to ignore the Société Robespierre for most of its members also belonged to the Société des Etudes Robespierristes which was founded in 1908 and is today, under the aegis of M. Georges Lefebvre, the fountainhead of revolutionary historiography. In 1957, when a majority of the National Education Commission (prodded by members of the National Assembly of the Fourth French Republic) voted to take official notice of the bicentennial of Robespierre's birth, it seemed likely that some of the indirect consequences of Buonarroti's testament to posterity would be brought to the attention of a wider audience. Instead—to go briefly beyond the terminal date of this survey—1958 saw the fall of the Fourth French Republic. The bicentennial was to be celebrated not in governmental but in academic circles, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Société des Etudes Robespierristes and the 25th anniversary of Albert Mathiez' death.

The 200th anniversary of Robespierre's birth was thus marked by the appearance of a special issue of the *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, containing many articles relevant to the subject of this essay (particularly Jacques Godechot's "Les Jacobins Italiens et Robespierre," XXX, 65-81); by the publication of a collection of Mathiez' articles, *Etudes sur Robespierre*, pref. by G. Lefebvre (Paris: Editions Sociales), 1958, and of a second edition

of his *Autour de Robespierre*; by the publication, under the direction of a professor from the University of Leipzig, of a large collaborative volume: *Maximilien Robespierre 1758-1794. Beiträge zu seinem 200 Geburtstag*, ed. by Walter Markov, pref. by G. Lefebvre (Berlin, 1958) containing contributions from twenty scholars including Bernstein and Cantimori; and by the republication of Buonarroti's "Observations sur Robespierre" along with Blanqui's "Notes sur Robespierre" in a most appropriately named journal: *Contrat Social* (May, 1958).⁵

¹ In a recent provocative article, "The Era of the French Revolution: Some Comments on Opportunities for Research and Writing," *The Journal of Modern History* (June, 1958) XXX, 118-130, Richard Cobb implied that French scholars were abandoning the "weary pastures" of revolutionary historiography for fresher more fertile fields of research and contrasted their healthy output with the wasting of "some of the best abilities in Italy . . . on the arid task of establishing the intellectual affiliations of Buonarroti and his friends" (p. 121). But the publications cited above, along with the appearance in a French journal of a scholarly controversy over Buonarroti's communist ideas: R.N.C. Coë, J. Dautry, A. Saitta, "Colloque sur Morelly," *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française* (Jan.-Mar., 1958), XXX, 50-64, suggest that French scholars are not behaving quite as Mr. Cobb would have them behave.

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